HOLIDAY ARTS ISSUE : **RONALD STEEL DETESTS "DUTCH"**

THE NEW REPUBLIC

REMBRANDT'S EYES
DAVID FREEDBERG

BALTHUS'S EYES
JED PERL

December 6, 1999

They Still Don't Get It

LIBERALS AND THE CRISIS OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

MICHELLE COTTLE

N WOLFE

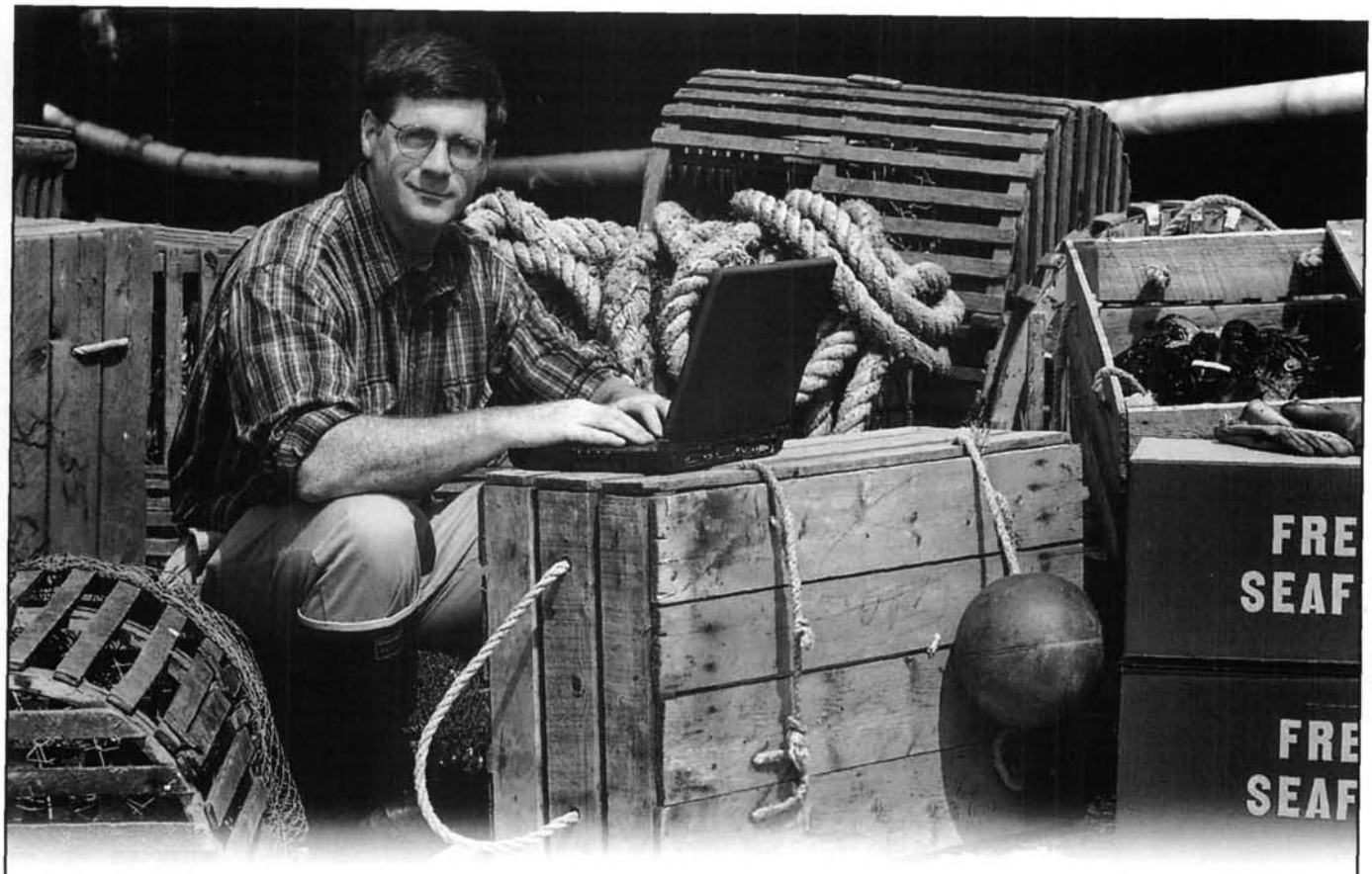
ITORS

#BXBKDML***5-DIGIT 94301
#TNR000006817 1/5#62 29OCT01

RON K UNZ 009
555 BRYANT ST #371 UI
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

$3.50US $3.50CAN
49
01742
0 787446 8



How do you keep track of 300 lobsters? With a mouse.

"I'm lucky enough to have turned my love of the sea into a business. And believe it or not, computers and lobster fishing go together really well."

Steve Burt, founder of Steven Burt Seafoods,® buys fresh lobsters from fishermen at dawn in Maine, and sells them in New York's Chinatown and outlets from Boston to Maryland. But how does he make sure his trucks deliver 40,000 pounds of lobster a week while it's still fresh? By tracking inventory, delivery times, and projected demand with Microsoft® software.

At Microsoft, we listen to small businesses, and create tools they need to innovate, grow, and thrive. To learn more, visit www.microsoft.com/smallbiz.

Microsoft®

Where do you want to go today?®

© 1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corp.
Other products and company names mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C.
DECEMBER 6, 1999
ISSUE 4,429

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND CHAIRMAN
MARTIN PERETZ

EDITOR
PETER BEINART
Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER
Executive Editor
NURITH C. AIZENMAN
Senior Editors
JONATHAN COHN, MICHELLE COTTLE, GREGG EASTERBROOK, DAVID GRANN, JOHN B. JUDIS, DANA MILBANK, ANDREW SULLIVAN, JAMES WOOD
Legal Affairs
JEFFREY ROSEN
Editor-at-Large
CHARLES LANE
Managing Editor
JASON ZENGERLE
Assistant Managing Editor
RUTH HALIKMAN
Films: STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater: ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Poetry: CHARLES WRIGHT
Art: JED PERL
Architecture: MARTIN FILLER
Dance: MINDY ALOFF
Contributing Writers
MATTHEW MILLER, LEE SIEGEL
New Republic Online
JEREMY MCCARTER
New Republic Books (BASIC BOOKS)
TIM BARTLETT
Contributing Editors
FOUAD AJAMI, AKHIL REED AMAR, ELIOT A. COHEN, JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN, NATHAN GLAZER, ANTHONY GRAFTON, ANN HULBERT, TONY JUDT, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, GLENN C. LOURY, SHERWIN B. NULAND, DAVID RIEFF, MICHAEL J. SANDEL, MAGGIE SCARF, RONALD STEEL, CASS R. SUNSTEIN, MARGARET TALBOT, E.V. THAW, MICHAEL WALZER, SEAN WILENTZ, ALAN WOLFE, C. VANN WOODWARD, ROBERT WRIGHT
Contributing Artists
JACK COUGHLIN, VINT LAWRENCE, DAVID SCHORR
Special Correspondent
ANNA HUSARSKA
Associate Editor
JONATHAN CHAIT (ON LEAVE)
Consulting Art Director
JONATHAN HOUSTON
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
Production Director
BRUCE STEINKE
Production Manager
HENRY RIGGS
Assistant Editors
CARRIE CUNNINGHAM, KATIE ISENBERG, RYAN LIZZA
Assistant to the Editor
SARAH WILDMAN
Assistant Literary Editor
BRIAN PHILLIPS
Assistant Poetry Editor
MELANIE REHAK
Reporter-Researchers
NEGAR AKHAVI, JAKE HALPERN, BENJAMIN SOSKIS

PUBLISHER
WILL LIPPINCOTT
Director of Advertising, West
JOAN STAPLETON TOOLEY
Director of Finance and Operations
CHRISTINA R. BONIFER
Director of Advertising, Washington
NICHOLAS COSTON
Director of Advertising, New York
ELLEN JARVIS
Marketing Manager
SHABNAM K. SHARMA
Circulation Manager
HOPE ROBERTS
Accounting Manager
KIMBERLY HUSTAD
Advertising Associate
SHANNEL MYERS
Advertising Coordinator
ANN ROSSAKI
Accounting Assistant
BONNIE SCHWARTZ-WOLTMAN
Circulation Assistant
KELLY SPRING
Back Issues and Reception
STEVEN DAVIS
Business Intern
CELINA CHAVEZ

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** A *Faster* response, a healthy debate, &c.

6 **ALAN WOLFE** TRB: NO DEAL Ends versus means in Decatur, Illinois.

9 **THE EDITORS** THE FIGHT'S NOT OVER The last gasp of permissive liberalism.

10 **NOTEBOOK** Donna Brazile insults her boss, the GOP milks taxpayers, &c.

12 **DOUGLAS FOSTER** SAN FRANCISCO DISPATCH: BOOMERANG San Francisco's economy has never been hotter. No wonder its voters are in such a foul mood.

15 **AKHIL REED AMAR** SPEAK SOFTLY Al Gore can be mad at Bill Clinton. Quietly.

18 **ROMESH RATNESAR** KUALA LUMPUR DISPATCH: THE PLOT THICKENS Mahathir Mohamad thinks everybody's out to get him. Malaysians can only hope he's right.

20 **JOSEPH GESSERT AND SHANNON MATTERN** BAD SIGNAL Racial preferences, deregulation, and the strange death of local radio.

22 **MATTHEW MILLER** TRAPPED How Gene Sperling, a smart, idealistic liberal, came to Washington to revive government activism and ended up presiding over its burial.

25 **MICHELLE COTTLE** ITCHING FOR A FIGHT Decatur gets its race war.

28 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: ROMANCE AND REALITY *The Insider* grips; *42 Up* is worthy of its predecessors.

30 **MINDY ALOFF** ON DANCE: SIGHT UNSEEN Dance's surprising return to Romanticism.

32 **JED PERL** ON ART: THE ALCHEMIST A seamy new biography fails to catch the daring independence of Balthus.

40 **LAWRENCE RAAB** POEM *Hamlet's Problems*

42 **RONALD STEEL** BRACKISH BEADS *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan* by Edmund Morris

44 **DAVID FREEDBERG** THE BOSOM OF HISTORY *Rembrandt's Eyes* by Simon Schama

52 **GORDON S. WOOD** IMPARTIALITY IN AMERICA *James Madison: Writings* edited by Jack N. Rakove

58 **MARTIN PERETZ** TEL AVIV DIARIST: NORMAL

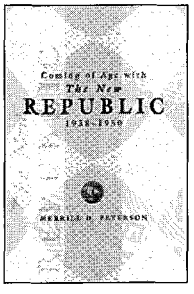
On the Cover : Photo by AP/CBS NEWS
On the Web : www.tnr.com

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 221, Number 23, Issue 4,429, December 6, 1999. (Printed in the U.S. on November 17, 1999.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 4 & 11, April 26 & May 3, July 19 & 26, and Sept. 13 & 20, 1999) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. For advertising inquiries, please contact Ann Rossaki at (202) 331-7494 or Shannel Myers in our NY sales office at (212) 924-8700. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $4.00 (includes postage & handling). **© 1999 by The New Republic, Inc.****(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 331-0275. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue, and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: tnr@aol.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call 1-800-827-1289 or visit our website at www.tnr.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Coming of Age with the *New Republic*, 1938–1950

MERRILL D. PETERSON



"Fascinating, revealing, and important, this intellectual autobiography will be of interest to Americans who lived through the decade of the 1940s and those who seek to understand it."
—JAMES L. ROARK

152 pages, $27.50

Churchill's "Iron Curtain" Speech Fifty Years Later

EDITED BY JAMES W. MULLER

With the assistance of the Churchill Center this book brings together essays that reflect on the past fifty years, recognizing Churchill's speech as a carefully conceived herald of the cold war for the Western democracies.

192 pages, illustrations, $27.50

NEW IN PAPER

The Death and Life of Germany

An Account of the American Occupation

EUGENE DAVIDSON

"A deeply interesting narrative that is marked by wide research and objective presentation."—THE NATIONAL BOOK FOUNDATION

456 pages, $19.95 paper

University of Missouri Press
2910 LeMone Boulevard
Columbia, MO 65201
1–800–828–1894

Unsafe at this speed

TO THE EDITORS:

Jackson Lears didn't really review my new book, *Faster*, but he took enough little shots at it ("Unsweet Smell of Success," October 18) that I'd like to comment. Accused of buying into "the basic American myths of classlessness and choice," I am evidently a "case in point" of something to do with Bill Gates. I am guilty of "universalist rhetoric" and "continued invocation of the first person plural" (I think this means I use the word "we" a lot). It "seems not to have occurred" to me that the acceleration of modern life may be something the powerful are imposing on the powerless.

Oh, grow up. Of course it has occurred to me. It's a point I address again and again—where it's relevant. I assert that time has become a shadow currency in the modern economy, where power can be measured by the ability of some companies and institutions to extract minutes and seconds from consumers against their will. I note that speed- and time-related anxiety come with increasing wealth; I claim that acceleration is the defining feature of the technocracy. My comment on workplace efficiency is that it's "by its nature brutal, stripping craftsmen of autonomy." And, sure, I also point out that in private life we sometimes serve as our own worst efficiency experts.

What I don't do is squeeze a big and complicated subject into an ideological basket. My book is mainly reporting. I'm trying to understand how things work. There's a lot to explore—impatience in elevators, the diffusion of technology, the scheduling of air travel, the express lines at fast-food restaurants, road rage, the pace of action films, and quite a bit more—and class structure, "market pressures," and "the corporate march of progress" don't do the job. I argue explicitly that it is wrong and self-defeating to think of people merely as victims.

As individuals we may or may not use the Internet, watch the seconds tick by on the microwave oven, flip from channel to channel with the remote control, or desperately seek new ways to save time. But we live in an increasingly interconnected world, and it would be foolish to ignore that. I couldn't help observing that we—yes, rich and poor, powerful and powerless—make choices that both reflect and foster the culture of speed.

JAMES GLEICK
Via the Internet

FRANK McCOURT'S HOT EIRE R.F. FOSTER
PAKISTAN'S PUTSCH
FOGGY BOTTOM BACKSTABBING
WHITE MAYORS CAN JUMP
THE NEW REPUBLIC
November 1, 1999
Comeback Kid
People thought Bill Paxon was crazy to quit Congress. Now he's practically running it.
By David Grann

JACKSON LEARS REPLIES:

James Gleick read my essay about as carefully as he researched his book. Rather than viewing people as victims, I urged that we clarify our thinking on technological change in order to open up political debate and make genuine, informed public choices possible. Contemporary policy discourse lurches between stark, inexorable determinism and fantasies of unfettered freedom; I suggested we explore the space in between, where democratic discussion and decision-making might actually take place. No, I did not want Gleick to squeeze his complex subject into an "ideological basket." But I was hoping for a coherent argument.

The race about race

TO THE EDITORS:

Fred Siegel has written a perceptive article dealing with the recent Philadelphia mayoral election ("Fair Philly," November 1). But his basic conclusion—that the election results would mirror the returns of other big cities showing a lack of racial polarization—is misplaced. Though racially divisive rhetoric was not used in the campaign between African American Democrat John Street and white Republican candidate Sam Katz, the returns again showed the city to be racially divided, with 93 percent of black voters choosing Street and about 85 percent of white voters voting for Katz.

This year's election was not all that different from some in the past. In 1983, Wilson Goode, an African American Democrat, won 95 percent of the black vote, while the white candidates for mayor, John Egan and Thomas Leonard, won a combined 88 percent of the white vote. In 1987, 94 percent of Philadelphia's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

blacks voted for Goode, while 82 percent of the city's white residents voted for his white challenger, Frank Rizzo.

Together, Street and Katz spent almost $25 million on this election—millions of it for TV and radio commercials. Strangely, the advertisements made no fundamental difference in the course of the campaign. The candidates' poll numbers remained constant for six weeks; essentially, it was a contest either man could win. In the end, the Democratic organization provided the key component in Street's victory, which was largely due to the resurgence of the Democratic Party and to the union workers who made up his field organization. The election was less about the votes of middle-class blacks and liberal whites than it was about those of working-class white Democrats. The Republicans were unable to match the Democratic organization operationally. If anything, the Philadelphia election proves that urban political machines, when faced with their own extinction, can still deliver.

DR. G. TERRY MADONNA
Director
Center for Politics & Public Affairs
Millersville University
Millersville, Pennsylvania

BERWOOD YOST
Director
Center for Opinion Research
Millersville University

Mind the gap

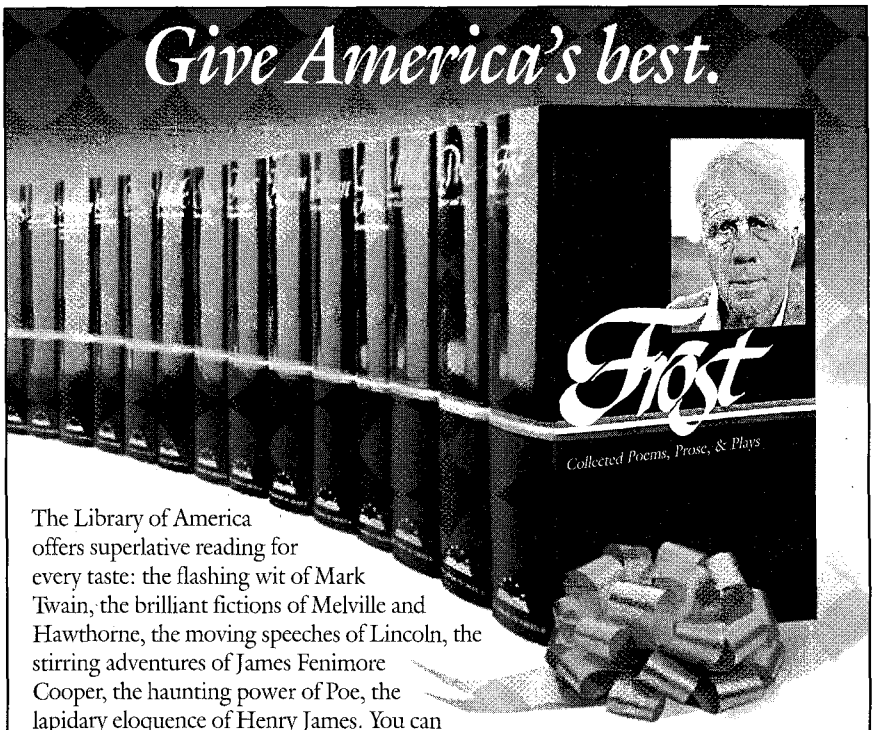
TO THE EDITORS:

Joanne Creighton, the president of Mount Holyoke College, asserts in the Correspondence section of the November 1 issue that "if I read [Claude] Steele's work correctly, the score gap between black and white students on such tests as the SAT may to a significant degree result from the fact that society has long sent black students the message that they will underperform on standardized tests."

Creighton does not read Steele's work correctly. Steele and his coauthor gave an experimental test to black and white students with *similar* SAT scores. They found that black students who were told that the test measured racial differences did somewhat worse than whites with comparable SAT scores. But the small depression in blacks' scores on the experimental test, compared to whites', was not nearly large enough to explain the several-hundred-point gap in average SAT scores between blacks and whites in the population as a whole. At most, the results explain a very small part of that gap.

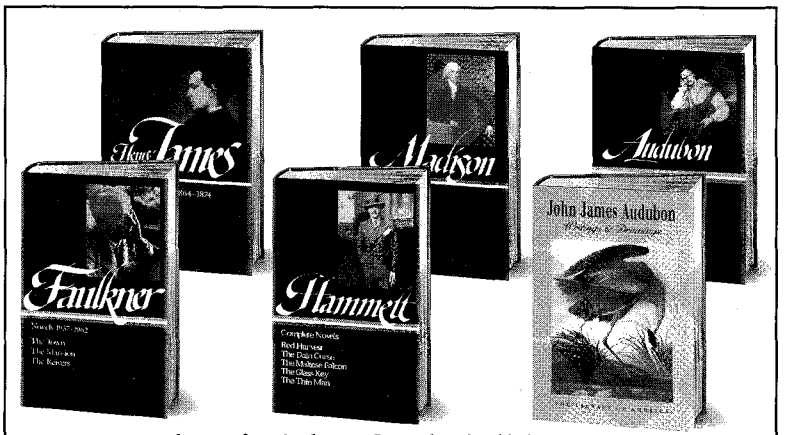
What SAT score differences measure is not test anxiety but very real disparities in academic preparation and effort, which in

continued on page 56



The Library of America offers superlative reading for every taste: the flashing wit of Mark Twain, the brilliant fictions of Melville and Hawthorne, the moving speeches of Lincoln, the stirring adventures of James Fenimore Cooper, the haunting power of Poe, the lapidary eloquence of Henry James. You can give the pleasure of discovering—or re-discovering—the mind-stretching essays of Thoreau, the social comedy of Edith Wharton, the enduringly popular novels of John Steinbeck, and so much more.

Each volume is a joy to give and an honor to receive: elegantly designed, printed on the finest paper, bound in durable cloth with a permanent ribbon marker, truly delightful to hold and read. For the connoisseur, for the student, for anyone who loves great books, there can be no better choice than America's best. Look for Library of America volumes and boxed sets wherever fine books are sold, or write for our free catalog.



America's best for the holidays

HENRY JAMES **Complete Stories 1864–1874** *Jean Strouse, editor*

WILLIAM FAULKNER **Novels 1957–1962: The Town, The Mansion, The Reivers** *Joseph Blotner and Noel Polk, editors*

JAMES MADISON **Writings** *Jack N. Rakove, editor*

DASHIELL HAMMETT **Complete Novels: Red Harvest, The Dain Curse, The Maltese Falcon, The Glass Key, The Thin Man** *Steven Marcus, editor*

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON **Writings and Drawings** *Christoph Irmscher, editor*

Available in classic black jacket and special gift edition

THE LIBRARY OF AMERICA
America's best writers deserve America's best editions
Available at better bookstores. Distributed by Penguin Putnam Inc. To order, or for a free catalog, call (212) 308-3360
The Library of America, 14 E. 60th Street, NY 10022. http://www.libraryofamerica.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

No Deal

THE IMAGES ARE familiar to anyone who knows American history. There are demonstrators, primarily African American, singing "We Shall Overcome" and led by a former aide to Martin Luther King Jr. And there are authorities, nearly all white, defending their crackdown on young black students who were accused of breaking the law. But the picture misleads. The events of last week in Decatur, Illinois, had little to do with black and white, less to do with liberal and conservative, and almost nothing to do with good guys and bad guys.

The facts of the case, as the lawyers say, are not in dispute. Seven students went on a rampage at a high school football game. In the wake of tragedies like Littleton, Decatur school officials had adopted a zero-tolerance policy on school violence, and they expelled six of the students (one left the school). Insisting that the board overreacted, Jesse Jackson has taken up the students' cause and demanded their full reinstatement.

As even his most severe critics must admit, Jackson has had remarkable success as a freelance diplomat. This spring, he convinced Slobodan Milosevic to free three American servicemen captured along Serbia's border with Macedonia. In 1990, during the run-up to the Gulf war, he got Saddam Hussein to release 700 foreign women and children that the Iraqi dictator had been threatening to use as human shields. And, after a tape recording captured racism in Texaco's boardroom, Jackson's protests persuaded the company to fork over $26 million over five years and relinquish control of its minority hiring to a committee of outsiders.

Yet, for all his past success, Jackson has been stymied in Decatur. Superintendent Kenneth Arndt, backed by a large and vocal group of parents, has so far refused to reverse the school board's decision, despite Jackson's efforts to turn up the heat by mobilizing new demonstrations. If Jackson even manages a face-saving compromise, it will be on Arndt's terms, not his. All of this raises an intriguing and so far unasked question: How could Jackson lose? Why is he encountering stronger resistance from local school officials in a small town in the Midwest than from foreign tyrants and massive corporations? The answer is that, in Decatur, Jackson has come up against something rather incorrigible: the peculiarly American reverence for due process.

To be fair, Jackson is appealing to something deep in the culture, as well—a long-standing American tradition, expressed most powerfully by the abolitionists, that affirms the priority of justice. "Justice firsters" argue that society should do what is right even when it's not popular—or even legal. Justice-first ideals reverberate among all those persuaded that a particular evil—the Vietnam War, capital punishment, the denial of abortion, or (paradoxically) abortion itself—must be stopped. Although Jackson insists he is not accusing anyone of racism, he is clearly responding to the broader injustice of a criminal justice system that punishes blacks more harshly than it punishes whites. It was wrong, he maintains, to throw these kids out of school and to deny them another chance. Wrongs must be reversed, and the sooner the better.

Officials in Decatur, by contrast, appealed to a similarly long-standing American tradition: respect for law. "Procedure firsters" believe that decisions made according to proper procedures should not be thrown out without great thought and consideration. This is, after all, a country whose founders expended considerable effort writing down constitutional rules meant to last for posterity. From Jefferson Smith in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* to Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird* to Sam Ervin during Watergate, Americans revere the homespun lawyer (fictional or factual) who, whatever his political leanings or level of sophistication, stands up for the rule of law.

Much of Decatur's resentment of Jackson seems directed at his belief, which he has taken no pains to hide, that the school board acted like a lynch mob. But that is not how the board understood its actions. It had adopted, after due deliberation, a policy that it took seriously. That policy, clearly understood by all, was violated. To undo the punishment—especially when no exonerating circumstances have been presented—would constitute serious interference with the way democracy ought to work.

What Jackson is realizing, to his chagrin, is that it is easier to negotiate with people who do not respect procedures than with those who do. One of the reasons Jackson has had success with dictators is that they, in their own deeply perverted way, are justice-firsters, too. Milosevic and Saddam do not allow democracy or law to interfere with what they believe is right. When they strike deals with Jackson, they need not go back and justify to constituents why the policies had to be changed or the agreements upset.

Corporate leaders are not dictators, but they, too, can be dealt with *mano a mano*. What is more, the topic of Jackson's negotiations with them has generally been affirmative action—itself a good example of a justice-first approach to politics. Never voted on by Congress, affirmative action came about through the decisions of courts and executive department administrators. When the voters have spoken against it, as they did in California's Proposition 209, the reaction of justice-firsters has been an immediate appeal to the courts to reverse the people's will. For corporate leaders, who don't have to put their preference policies up for a vote, it's even easier. If the ends justify it, they can throw process aside and change corporate policy all on their own. And, when they meet with Jackson, that is exactly what they do.

The choice between justice and procedure is not easy, because a good society needs both. But America has probably been damaged more by the zealous pursuit of justice than by the overweening commitment to procedure. The danger of too much zeal is murder; the anti-abortion extremists who kill doctors are justice-firsters gone amok. The danger of too much procedure is delay, a serious, indeed unacceptable, danger if what is at stake is slavery. But we should also remember, as the U.S. Supreme Court failed to in *Roe v. Wade*, that action carried out belatedly but correctly may resolve an injustice better in the long run than a precipitous rush to justice that leaves conflict and anger in its wake.

Jackson's likely defeat in Decatur is, then, a small victory for American democracy. Presented with evidence of racial injustice, we must move with more than "deliberate speed" to correct it. But we should not move with such speed that we abrogate the procedures that guarantee the rights possessed by individuals of all races. That, unfortunately, is what elites outside Decatur seem all too willing to do. In adopting speech codes that leave the accused with little protection, colleges have trashed due process. So have university officials who, in their determination to diversify, have cooked up admissions procedures that cannot stand the light of day. School officials in Decatur took steps they believed necessary to curb school violence; they did so publicly and democratically. And, in standing by their actions, they remind us why we have procedures in the first place.

ALAN WOLFE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Holiday Books

WITH SUBSTANCE

THE UNSTEADY MARCH

The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America

Philip A. Klinkner
with **Rogers M. Smith**

"[An] unflinching portrait of the leviathan of American race relations. . . . The authors' theories will likely spur debate, yet they offer scholarly confirmation of a notion widely held in the black community for many decades. . . . This important book should be read by all who aspire to create a more perfect union."
—starred review, *Publishers Weekly*
Cloth $32.50

SPEAKING INTO THE AIR

A History of the Idea of Communication

John Durham Peters

"Guaranteed to alter your thinking about communication. Peters begins this delightful essay by observing that 'Only moderns could be facing each other and be worried about "communicating" as if they were thousands of miles apart.'. . . Original, erudite, and beautifully written, this book is a gem."—*Kirkus Reviews*
Cloth $26.00

THE COMPLETE CIVIL WAR JOURNAL AND SELECTED LETTERS OF THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

Edited by **Christopher Looby**

"This journal, from which Higginson drew his celebrated memoir, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, finally receives its deserved full publication. . . . Higginson's texts can once again educate, gratify and delight readers."
—*Publishers Weekly*
Cloth $35.00

SOCIAL SECURITY

The Phony Crisis

Dean Baker and **Mark Weisbrot**

"The authors challenge basic assumptions with vigor and intelligence. . . . An absolutely relevant and important analysis, presented with force and clarity, that asks, basically, what kind of a nation we really are."—*Kirkus Reviews*
Cloth $22.00

CONQUEST OF ABUNDANCE

A Tale of Abstraction versus the Richness of Being

Paul Feyerabend
Edited by **Bert Terpstra**

"The book is intended to show how specialists and common people reduce the abundance that surrounds and confuses them, and the consequences of their actions. . . . I also try to emphasize the essential ambiguity of all concepts, images, and notions that presuppose change. Without ambiguity, no change, ever."—from *Killing Time: The Autobiography of Paul Feyerabend*
Cloth $27.00

FRENCH DNA

Trouble in Purgatory

Paul Rabinow

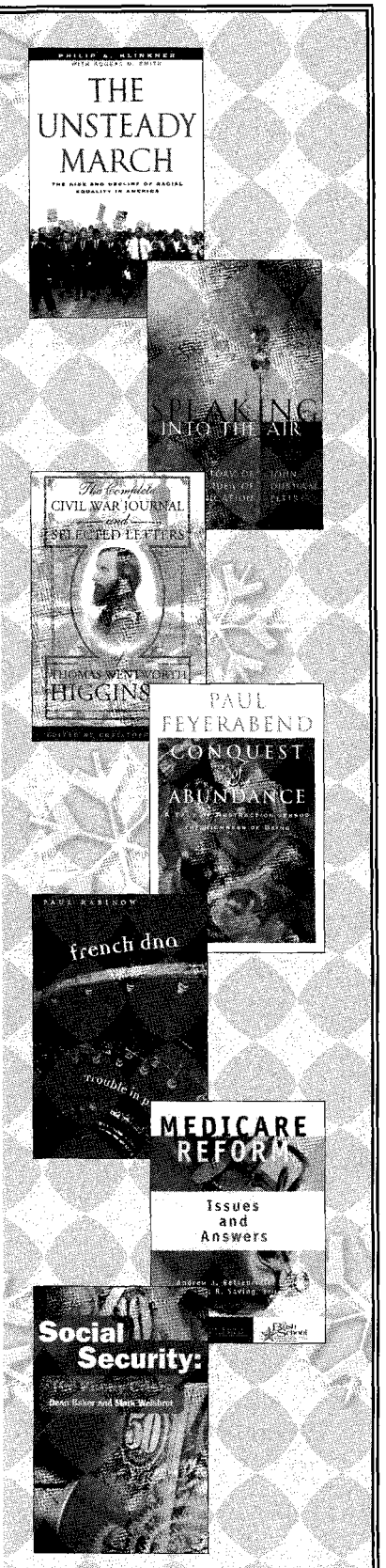
"*French DNA* convincingly shows how the practices that surround science reinvent identities and classifications previously thought immutable. . . . Leaving room for interpretation, Rabinow has created a work that would benefit businessmen, scientists, social critics, philosophers, and others who believe themselves linked to scientific practice."—Rahul K. Dhanda, *Boston Book Review*
Cloth $25.00

MEDICARE REFORM

Issues and Answers

Edited by **Andrew J. Rettenmaier** and **Thomas R. Saving**

"This volume contains the facts motivating a major overhaul of health care financing for America's elderly as well as presents clearly and analyzes most of the available options for Medicare reform. It should be a 'must read' for all federal health care policymakers and those wishing to advise them."—James F. Rodgers, Vice President of Health Policy, American Medical Association
Cloth $25.00

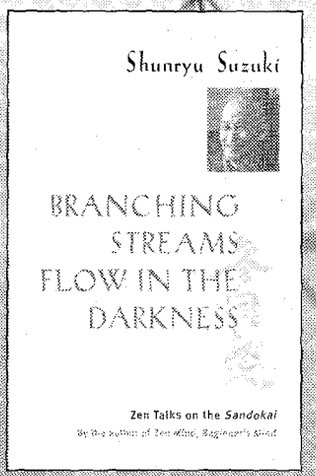


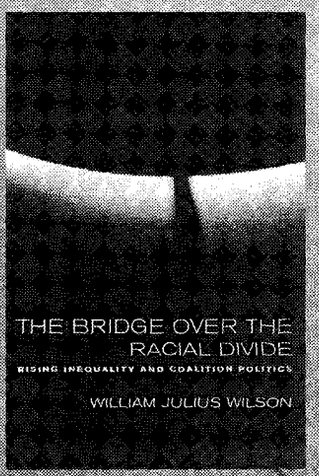
Available at bookstores.

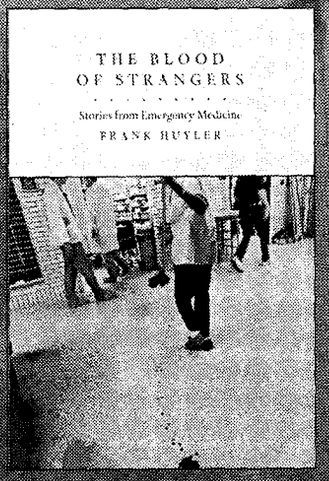
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
www.press.uchicago.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our best to You







BRANCHING STREAMS FLOW IN THE DARKNESS

Zen Talks on the Sandokai
by SHUNRYU SUZUKI
Edited by Mel Weitsman and Michael Wenger
From the author of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*— "An opportunity to peer even more deeply into Suzuki Roshi's Zen mind.... a great and unexpected gift, reviving that charming voice and warm wisdom we grew to know and love so well."—Jon Kabat-Zinn, author of *Wherever You Go, There You Are*
$22.50 hardcover

RUSH FOR RICHES

Gold Fever and the Making of California
by J.S. HOLLIDAY
"The book is seamless.... *Rush for Riches* is monumental. A review can barely scratch the surface."
—*San Francisco Chronicle Review*
A Main Selection of the History Book Club; Copublished with the Oakland Museum of California
$29.95 paperback, $55.00 hardcover

WALT WHITMAN

The Song of Himself
by JEROME LOVING
"Loving's book is full of good sense. It is a treasury of useful information."
—*New York Times Book Review*
$35.00 hardcover

THE BRIDGE OVER THE RACIAL DIVIDE

Rising Inequality and Coalition Politics
by WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON
"A must read for all of us who care about justice and democracy in a multicultural America."
—Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
$19.95 hardcover

THE BLOOD OF STRANGERS

Stories from Emergency Medicine
by FRANK HUYLER
"A modest jewel, a compact, faceted gem that shines with intelligence."
—*Boston Globe*
"Watch out! This book could make you miss your subway stop."—*Booklist*
$19.95 hardcover

JOAN OF ARC

The Image of Female Heroism
by MARINA WARNER
Available again—"Warner seeks to examine the nature of the myth itself and to find out why it has such imaginative force. She...does it extremely well."—*Newsweek*
$16.95 paperback

CHILDREN OF A VANISHED WORLD

by ROMAN VISHNIAC
Edited by Mara Vishniac Kohn & Miriam Hartman Flacks
Between 1935 and 1938 the celebrated photographer Roman Vishniac explored the cities and villages of Eastern Europe, capturing life in the Jewish *shtetlekh*. Here are 70 of his photos of children accompanied by a selection of nursery rhymes, songs, poems, and chants for children's games, both in Yiddish and in English translation.
$25.00 hardcover

ARCHIPELAGO

The Islands of Indonesia
From the Nineteenth-Century Discoveries of Alfred Russel Wallace to the Fate of Forests and Reefs in the Twenty-First Century
by GAVAN DAWS & MARTY FUJITA
Prologue by Edward O. Wilson, Epilogue by John C. Sawhill
This magnificently illustrated book sweeps from Wallace's 19th-century discoveries in biogeography to the looming biodiversity crisis of the 21st century.
Published in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, a portion of the proceeds from this book will go toward conservation efforts in Indonesia
$45.00 hardcover

At bookstores or order 1-800-822-6657

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

www.ucpress.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Fight's Not Over

"THE SO-CALLED zero-tolerance policy is without mercy and without sensitivity," the Reverend Jesse Jackson declared last week, protesting the Decatur, Illinois, school board's decision to expel six students for inciting a melee at a football game. Jackson is not alone in his view. The American Civil Liberties Union, civil rights leaders, and others on the left also want zero-tolerance laws abolished. Illinois Representative Bobby Rush is calling for congressional hearings on their legality; he's even asked U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno for an investigation.

And it's true that zero-tolerance laws are sometimes flawed in design or execution. It's also true that they effectively combat perhaps the greatest crisis in public education today: the crisis of violence. To call them inherently racist is to imply that a strictly disciplined school, a school where students learn without fear, serves only the interests of whites. And it is that proposition, it seems to us, that represents racism of the most debilitating kind.

In fact, zero tolerance has a liberal pedigree; it was originally the brainchild of the late Albert Shanker's American Federation of Teachers (AFT). In Cincinnati in 1990, the AFT discovered that local teachers were spending enormous amounts of time dealing with drugs, guns, assaults, and brawls. "In basically half the classrooms in the city, the teachers couldn't teach effectively," said Tom Mooney, vice president of the union. In 1991, Cincinnati responded by establishing automatic penalties for students who commit violent acts or are caught with drugs, alcohol, or weapons. Texas followed suit two years later. In 1994, Congress required states to pass zero-tolerance laws or forfeit federal money.

Since then, counties and cities have extended the list of zero-tolerance violations. And while these statutes have led to occasional excesses—such as the eighth-grade honors student in Georgia suspended for bringing his French teacher a bottle of vintage wine as a Christmas present—in most cases the laws are working. In Texas, a survey found that from 1993 to 1998, the percentage of teachers who viewed assaults on students as a "significant problem" dropped from 53 to 31. In Baltimore, where schools had been rife with violence, an aggressive zero-tolerance law adopted last spring has produced a 30 percent drop in student assaults on other students and a 50 percent decrease in student assaults on teachers and other staff.

But, for the critics, the evidence that zero tolerance makes schools safer is beside the point. The victims of school violence are not the ones over whom they lose sleep. What, they ask, do such laws do for the students who get suspended or expelled? Ruth Zweifler, executive director of the Michigan Student Advocacy Center, says that her state's zero-tolerance law "erodes our commitment to public education. Underneath it is the message that we no longer believe we need to educate all children." No; the message is that we will not, in the name of educating all children, force the vast majority to live under conditions that make education impossible. Shanker, a holdover from an age of grittier, less therapeutic liberalism, understood this. "Some people," he said in 1995, "think of schools as sort of custodial institutions.... Or they think the school's job is socialization.... The central role of the schools ... is academic achievement. We have to be tough because basically we are defending the right of children to an education."

Behind the other objections, of course, lies one central one: that zero-tolerance laws are racist. The NAACP cites statistics showing that black students are more likely than white students to be suspended or expelled. To be sure, when a particular school singles out blacks and coddles whites, school boards should conduct a careful review. But, in most cases, the racial disparity in expulsions is smaller than the racial disparity in arrests for violent crimes. That African American students may be statistically more likely than other students to commit violent acts is a grave problem that demands serious government attention to the conditions under which African American children grow up. But to use that disparity as a reason to tolerate acts of violence is to condemn innocent children, many of them black, to regimes of terror. To call such a policy compassionate is a profound linguistic and moral distortion.

Not so long ago, it was commonplace for liberals to sanction such distortions. Thankfully, and with great effort (some of it expended on these pages), liberalism has largely rid itself of its propensity to equate moral decency with the indulgence of immoral behavior. Liberals, by and large, no longer assume that compassion means light sentences for criminals or allowing the able-bodied to claim government money absent a day's work. As Decatur shows, however, the battle is not completely won. Permissive liberalism, like all dying creeds, has its last bastion. How unfortunate that it is the American school. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTEBOOK

FAREWELL TO ARMS?: The Westminster sobriquet for Peter Mandelson, Tony Blair's minister for Northern Ireland, is "the Prince of Darkness," so perhaps it is appropriate that Mandelson played a central part in the latest rescue of the Ulster peace process. Much of the negotiation took place in deep secrecy, and its apparently successful conclusion rests on private assurances from the IRA of imminent disarmament. On November 16, both David Trimble of the Ulster Unionist Party and Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein made carefully choreographed statements of good intentions. But the key concession was made by Trimble. Under immense pressure from London and Washington, he agreed to enter into a devolved government with the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein, without an explicit promise by the IRA that the organization had begun the process of disarmament. This despite the fact that a key feature of the Good Friday accord was precisely that the IRA committed to abandoning its military force in exchange for political power. So the key principle of all sound democratic negotiations with terrorists—that they lay down their arms before being allowed to enter the political process—has been essentially discarded. The IRA will shortly have seats in the new governing bodies for Ulster while retaining its two tons of Semtex explosive and 650 AK-47 rifles as backup. Even worse, under the accord, 300 IRA terrorist prisoners have already been released early from British and Irish jails. In other words, this terrorist army is now potentially stronger than ever and has gained political legitimacy without making any substantive concessions. Trimble now has the difficult task of selling this agreement to his Unionist party leadership. We won't blame them if they're skeptical.

BRAZILE NUTS: Among the many remarkable statements Al Gore's campaign manager, Donna Brazile, made to *The Washington Post* on November 16 was the following blanket description of Caucasian males. "[Brazile] will not let the 'white boys' win," the *Post* reported. Brazile said that was not a description of "gender or race, it's an attitude. A white-boy attitude is 'I must exclude, denigrate and leave behind.' ... They don't see it or think about it. It's a culture." "It is the sense of utter entitlement," explained the *Post*. "And that she will not have." Since when, we wonder, is the phrase "white-boy attitude" not about gender or race? And since when was Al Gore's campaign manager determined not to let a "white boy" win?

An excerpt from **Locked in the Cabinet II: The Bradley Administration** by Robert Reich

I remember the moment well. It was six years ago, in November 1999. It was time for me to make a decision. I knew that if I endorsed Bill I might hurt Al's feelings. After all, the vice president and I had become good friends during my four years in the Clinton administration. There were days when my feelings for Al were so powerful that I forgot he wasn't a Rhodes scholar. When I called Al to tell him that I was going to endorse Bill, he pleaded with me to change my mind.

"Bob," he begged, "you can't abandon me. How can I be expected to win if I don't have your legions of admirers and supporters behind me? You're the conscience of the nation."

But not even that fine and exemplary man, the greatest vice president this country has ever seen, could dissuade me. My relationship with Bill Bradley was too strong. Yes, we may have disagreed on some policy matters—there was that pesky Medicaid thing—but those disagreements paled before our deep bond, which dated back years.

At the press conference to announce my endorsement, I joked, "I met Bill Bradley years ago, when we played together on the Knicks." The crowd nearly doubled over with laughter. No, my game had always been too street to allow me to play in the staid NBA. Bill and I had met years ago on the hard asphalt courts of New York City, when he was starring for the Knicks and I was making my reputation as one of the city's finest playground players.

I remember it almost like it was yesterday, that first day that I met Bill, when he and some of his Knicks teammates traveled up to 150th Street to get a look at me, a four-foot-ten-inch basketball phenom the whole city was buzzing about. They called me Li'l Pearl.

Right away, I could see Bill's courage: he volunteered to check me. His 20-inch height advantage notwithstanding, it was a gutsy move on his part. I mean, he could hardly see me from up there. And even though I drove by him for layup after layup, until all the guys hanging out by the chain-link fence were yelling out taunts at him, he showed a lot of heart that day, guarding me until the very last bucket was scored. "Li'l Pearl," he said, "you got game." No, Brother Bradley, you got game. I knew right then that one day he'd be president. And that was how the great turn-of-the-century layup for liberalism began.

MARS ATTACKS: Last week NASA released an internal report on the disappearance of the Mars Climate Orbiter, lost as it approached the Martian atmosphere. While the press dwelled on the amusing fact that confusion between metric and English measurement units caused the probe essentially to miss the entire planet, the report's most damning finding was overlooked: NASA officials repeatedly ignored engineers who warned that the probe was off course and needed an extra firing of its engines. Shouldn't the *Challenger* disaster have cured NASA's higher-ups of this tendency? Also overlooked in all the laughter was this coincidence: The NASA report came out the same week that a Department of Defense study acknowledged that a ballistic-missile defense system is nowhere near technologically practical. Still, those pushing for early deployment of such a system continue to claim that the United States is already able to field antimissile spacecraft that could strike warheads only a few feet wide. Maybe we should practice hitting Mars first.

ANNAN OUTRAGE WATCH: We're not trying to pick on Kofi Annan. Really. It's just that every time we resolve to lay off the U.N. secretary-general, he does something really, really dumb. Consider Annan's remarks on the Chinese gov-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

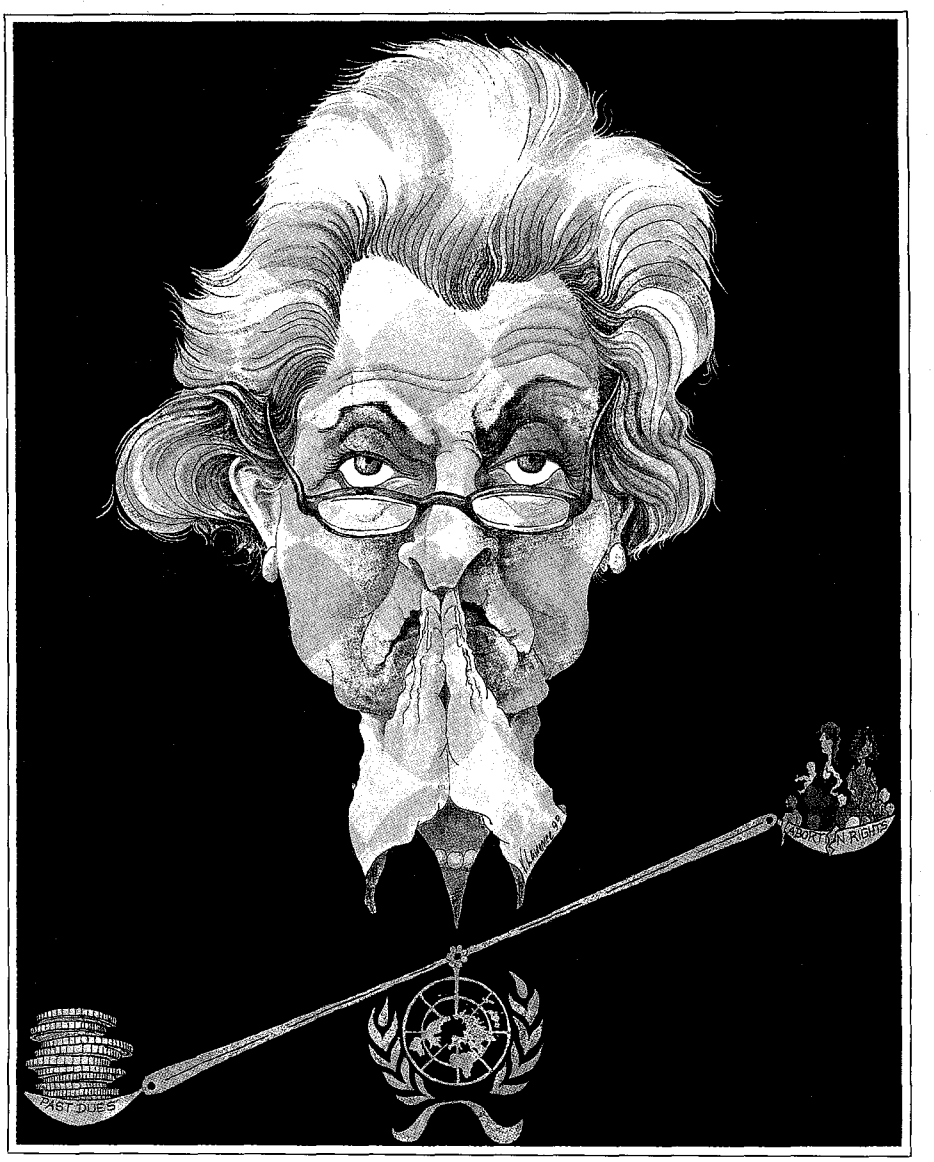
ernment's crackdown on China's Falun Gong sect, made during his visit to Beijing this week. Readers will recall that since Falun Gong unnerved the government with a peaceful 10,000-strong demonstration in Beijing last April, the government has responded by outlawing the group, charging dozens of its top leaders with major crimes, and temporarily detaining and beating thousands of its members and threatening them with job loss. Less sophisticated souls might conclude that the Chinese regime is engaged in a gross violation of human rights. Indeed, just hours before Annan's arrival in Tiananmen Square, some 15 Falun Gong members were hauled away by authorities for unfurling a banner with the group's name on it. But, after meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, Annan pronounced himself reassured. "I think I leave here with a better understanding of some of the issues involved," Annan said. "That in dealing with this issue, the fundamental rights of citizens will be respected and some of the actions [Chinese officials] are taking are for the protection of individuals." Tell that to the families of the three Falun Gong members who China admits died in government custody.

GOT MILK?: The latest obstacle to wrapping up Congress's final spending bill is ... spilled milk. In 1996, Congress ordered the Agriculture Department to revise the nation's antiquated milk-pricing system, a Depression-era relic that, in an age before effectively refrigerated transportation, sought to ensure a well-distributed dairy supply by setting milk prices according to a farm's distance from the Wisconsin dairy heartland. The Republican-sponsored Freedom to Farm law also set 1999 as the expiration date for the Northeast Dairy Compact, a pricing mechanism that sets milk prices higher in the Northeast. But now Republican leaders are pushing to scrap these reforms—which, according to the USDA, would cut milk prices by about two cents per gallon, saving consumers between $185 million and $1 billion and taxpayers from $42 million to $149 million—and to extend the shelf life of the Dairy Compact for another two years. GOP leaders have tried to insert the extension into the end-of-session appropriations bill, despite the White House's threat of a veto. The Republicans' glaring about-face is a gift to Vermont Senator James Jefford, who faces a tough reelection bid next year; salvaging the price controls would give him a sweetheart deal to bring home to his state's dairy farmers. Nothing curdles high-minded Republican free-market rhetoric like the heat of the campaign season.

BUT ENOUGH ABOUT YOU: ABC's Carole Simpson interviewing Bill Clinton: "I have to bask in this moment, for a moment, because I am here talking to the most powerful man on the planet, who was a poor boy from Arkansas.... I am an African American woman, grew up working-class on the south side of Chicago, and this is a pretty special moment for me to be here talking to you. How does it feel talking to me? That I made it, too, when people said I wouldn't be able to." (*Thanks to Jesse Walker of Los Angeles, California.*)

HOME NEWS: With this issue we inaugurate "Vint's Week," longtime TNR illustrator Vint Lawrence's pictorial take on the news. ■

VINT'S WEEK



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

San Francisco Dispatch

Boomerang

By Douglas Foster

"No time. There's just no time for interviews," explained an aide to the usually voluble Willie L. Brown Jr., the mayor of San Francisco. But she invited me to tag along for a pub crawl beginning at eight o'clock on a Friday night at the Last Day Saloon. The name seemed like a bad omen for one of the best-known African American elected officials in the country. After all, following a first round of elections that proved considerably more bruising than expected, Brown now finds himself scrambling toward a potentially career-ending runoff on December 14.

Viewed from afar, nothing would seem less likely than the toppling of a pro-gay, pro-affirmative-action liberal mayor in America's archetypal liberal city. In fact, Brown's position should be even more secure than that. He's the pro-gay, pro-affirmative-action liberal mayor of a liberal city enjoying an economic boom. In states and localities across America, good times are making for reelection cakewalks. But that's the strange thing about the liberals of San Francisco: economic good fortune doesn't necessarily make them smile. The city's booming real estate market has made it extraordinarily difficult for residents, especially poorer residents, to afford places to live. And that's making San Francisco's lefties angry—maybe angry enough to toss out their mayor in favor of a guy who wasn't even on the ballot.

After 31 years in California's state assembly, nearly half of them as its powerful speaker, Brown returned to San Francisco in 1995 to oust incumbent Mayor Frank Jordan, trading in his elevated post for the housing, sewage, and transit concerns of a medium-sized city. Over four years, Brown focused much of his attention on big development and job creation.

And create jobs he did, some of them in the government. But, while employment rates rose, attracting newcomers to the city, construction of new residential housing, particularly for low- and middle-income residents, lagged badly. Vacancy rates dropped to one percent, meaning that it was tough for anybody but the rich to find new places to live. Service on Muni, the public transit system Brown famously promised to fix "in 100 days," also deteriorated. And, as his term came to a close, Brown's administration was rocked by charges of corruption in the agency that oversees minority contracting. A complaint by a black contractor sparked an FBI investigation, a grand jury was convened, and Brown's advisers remain nervous that further revelations might hurt their man in the runoff.

After a 35-year career of happy Election Days, Brown's comeuppance came hard on November 2, and it came from the left. Tom Ammiano, a gay stand-up comic and former schoolteacher, former member of the school board, and current president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, wasn't even on the ballot on November 2. But his supporters mounted an unprecedented write-in campaign that vaulted him past 16 other candidates—including Jordan and a key political power broker, Clint Reilly—into the December runoff.

Nearly two weeks after Ammiano's surprise showing, at Josie's Cabaret and Juice Joint—Ammiano's campaign headquarters, in the heart of San Francisco's predominantly gay Castro district—lines of volunteers stocked up on literature and listened as Ammiano exhorted them to "prove that San Francisco is on the cutting edge of democratization." Looming above Ammiano's head as he spoke hung the banner of the Harvey Milk Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Democratic Club, complete with a line drawing of the martyred gay icon. Milk's legacy is still a potent political force in the city, and it haunts Brown.

Milk, the first openly gay elected official in San Francisco, was assassinated at City Hall along with Mayor George Moscone in 1978. Though 21 years seems like eons in contemporary politics, these assassinations remain San Francisco's deep, vestigial trauma. Brown was a close friend of Moscone's. And Milk's memory animates much of Ammiano's insurgent effort—particularly his history of populist, grassroots campaigns against the local liberal establishment. Ammiano and his older supporters worked on Milk's early campaigns, and several of his younger organizers recall that their own political awakenings were inspired by TV coverage of Milk's buoyant presence in San Francisco's first gay pride marches more than two decades ago.

"It's Harvey's mantle, sure," Ammiano says. "Because Harvey Milk gave more than lip service to coalition politics. He really did appeal to Asian voters, as well as seniors and mom-and-pop businesses. But this campaign also springs from the legacy of other openly gay people who have served on the board, as well as the legacy of our community in general, of how we have been so tenacious about having a place at the table. I look at myself as being one cog in that wheel."

Ammiano, 58, began his mayoral campaign as an extremely reluctant cog. Early this year, he decided a campaign would be too expensive to mount and impossible to win. Brown is a prodigious fund-raiser, raising and spending $2.3 million in the election's first round. He and the other major candidates in the race, Jordan and Reilly (the latter of whom had $4 million of his own money to invest), had already embarked on what Ammiano predicted would become a demoralizing, nasty contest. And his predictions were borne out. The tone of the race devolved swiftly, centering at one point on revelations from Brown's top political adviser that Reilly had once, long ago, battered a girlfriend.

But, while Ammiano was sitting the race out, his supporters weren't. Grassroots advocates for housing and the homeless, angry at Brown, had already run successful, low-cost referenda on tenant issues against a well-funded opposition over the previous years. Those successes gave them

Douglas Foster is a journalist living in Berkeley, California.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW HARDCOVERS

The Liberal Education of Charles Eliot Norton

James Turner

"A comprehensive, authoritative account of a nearly forgotten figure who almost single-handed invented 'Western Civilization' as an organizing principle for liberal arts education in the United States . . . Provides serious material for reflection on the tangled histories of the political and intellectual assumptions that underlie today's culture wars."
—Christopher Shannon, *The Weekly Standard*

$45.00 hardcover

A History of Philosophy in the Twentieth Century

Christian Delacampagne
translated by M. B. DeBevoise

"The emphasis in the title of Delacampagne's volume should be on the preposition "in" since this is not just a history *of* twentieth-century philosophy but a history that tries to take some account of the cultural and political setting as well as the specific content of what various philosophers and philosophical movements have said during this period."—David Pellauer, DePaul University, editor of *Philosophy Today*

$42.50 hardcover

NOW IN PAPERBACK

The Smoke of Satan

Conservative and Traditionalist Dissent in Contemporary American Catholicism
Michael W. Cuneo

"A witty, even hilarious, and sometimes frightening study of the inner workings, the theological convictions, and the major gripes of three different 'factions' of the Catholic right."—*America*

$16.95 paperback

A Passion for Films

Henri Langlois and the Cinémathèque Française
Richard Roud
foreword by François Truffaut

"*A Passion for Films* is a perfect title for Richard Roud's loving biography of Langlois . . . His book is also a personal memoir and a brief history of film archives and archivists. Most important, *A Passion for Films* provides an account of how Langlois virtually single-handedly created what we call today a film culture."—Dan Isaac, *New York Times Book Review*

$16.95 paperback

Henry James

The Imagination of Genius, A Biography
Fred Kaplan

"A good up-to-date one-volume life of Henry James was long overdue; Fred Kaplan . . . has done the job splendidly."
—Miranda Seymour, *New York Times Book Review*

$19.95 paperback

Venus Envy

A History of Cosmetic Surgery
Elizabeth Haiken

"This book charts how millions have spent billions to enlarge or shrink body parts . . . Plastic surgery embraces self-enhancement, prejudice, greed, submission and opportunity. This is about life in a democracy, where (for a price) any boy can be president and any girl can be Miss America."—Kate Callen, *San-Diego Union-Tribune*

$18.95 paperback

Bohemian Paris

Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930
Jerrold Seigel

"This highly readable book probes further than any other I know into the reciprocating movements that connect and distinguish bohemia and bourgeois."—Roger Shattuck, *New York Review of Books*

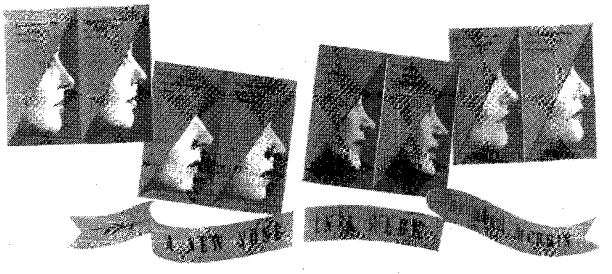
$18.95 paperback

The Voyage of the *Argo*

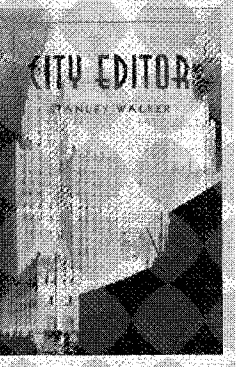
The *Argonautica* of Gaius Valerius Flaccus
translated by David R. Slavitt

"Slavitt's rendering is a pleasure to read and captures the essence of the original—conveying its force, novelty, and excitement. I expect that it will gain Valerius Flaccus a substantial readership."
—David Konstan, Brown University

$15.95 paperback



A VIEW FROM THE '30S



City Editor

Stanley Walker
foreword by Alexander Woollcott

"The reissue of Stanley Walker's classic 1934 book, 'City Editor,' has its moments as a saucy explication of the Depression-era newspaper world. It's a baseline for how far we've come and how far we haven't."—*New York Times*

$17.95 paperback

The Night Club Era

Stanley Walker
introduction by Alva Johnston

"An extremely amusing book . . . very briskly and pleasantly written."—H. L. Mencken

The Night Club Era offers a singular, serious—though never sober—history of New York City during Prohibition. Here we meet murderers and millionaires, gangsters, bartenders, celebrities of the stage, screen, and society, and a host of other colorful characters who populated the city's diverse night clubs, from El Fey to the Cotton Club.

$17.95 paperback

Available at bookstores

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS
1-800-537-5487 • www.press.jhu.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

confidence that the same door-to-door canvasing and word-of-mouth proselytizing could trump money in a mayoral election as well on behalf of Ammiano, the most resolutely pro-tenant, pro-rent-control member of the Board of Supervisors. "We thought: Why wait for him to decide? Why not present something to him that's already in place?" recalls Jerry Threet, a tenants' rights attorney.

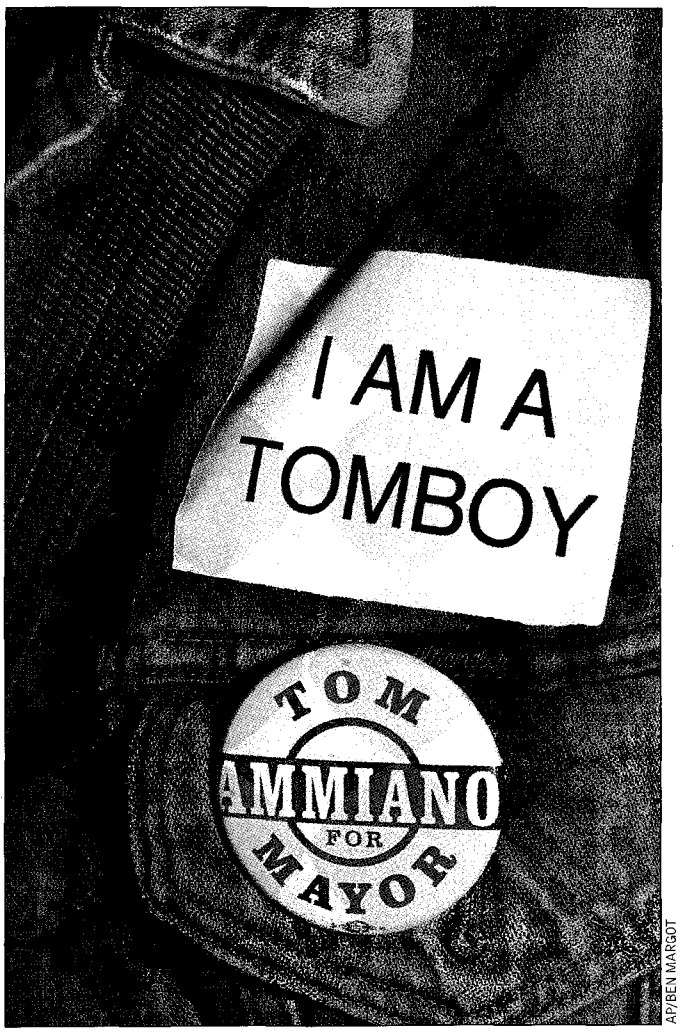
"Look, it was a powder keg," adds Robert Haaland, a tenants' rights organizer also active in promoting the rights of transgender people. "There's nothing more primal in this city than housing. The homeless population doubled while we had this booming economy." Threet, Haaland, and a handful of other housing activists mounted a petition drive, galvanizing more than 2,000 people to volunteer for a campaign that didn't yet have a willing candidate. And, despite it all, Ammiano disappointed his supporters, announcing in late summer that he'd decided not to mount a challenge to Brown.

"We were all devastated by that decision," remembers Tommi Avicolli Mecca, a member of the network of pro-tenant activists who had volunteered in the "Run, Tom, Run" phase of the campaign. "I was pissed off at Tom. He was saying the numbers aren't there, the money isn't there. But I said, 'You don't need the money, the people love you.'"

Instead of throwing away their phone lists and disbanding their network, several organizers of the effort to draft Ammiano, including Hank Wilson, one of the original founders of the Milk Club, decided they would create an "Ammiano for Mayor" campaign whether Ammiano liked it or not. When Ammiano finally relented and agreed to run, in October, support flooded in. In just 21 days, a mass grassroots mobilization generated 47,855 write-in votes on a budget of only $25,000. Ammiano claimed 25 percent of the vote, second to Brown's 39 percent (74,304 votes), sweeping him past candidates, like Jordan and Reilly, who were actually on the ballot and had been in the race for months.

Brown seemed stung by the results and thrown off his stride. But, after a few days in Las Vegas, he returned to campaign hard for reelection. At a presentation before a primarily Chinese-American group of business owners a week after the November 2 vote, Brown posed the runoff election as a stark choice between two candidates, "one with a record of 500 no-hitters and several Cy Young awards versus another player who has never pitched a no-hitter, never played a whole game, never even attended a whole game." Brown admitted that the deepening housing crisis was a problem, but he tried to get some credit for the economic turnaround that has created it. "We are the victims of our own success," Brown said, his lower lip extended in a doleful pout. "We've made San Francisco the most attractive place to live, the most attractive place to do business, in the entire country. I could not envision that we would be so successful that we would price ourselves out of the deal. Now I want to build lots of houses. Lots of houses. Lots of *houses*."

But, Brown's efforts notwithstanding, Ammiano still seems to have the momentum. A *San Francisco Examiner*/KTVU poll published November 14 showed Brown ahead with 43 percent of the vote, Ammiano behind by 10 points at 33 percent, and 24 percent undecided. "This a real race!" Ammiano exulted. Among those polled, Brown got high marks for leadership and management abilities, but Ammiano trumped him in categories like "understanding neighborhoods" and "family values."



AP/BEN MARGOT

In a city where only 47 percent of the population is white but whites still represent 71 percent of likely voters, the contest is tight, according to David Binder, a veteran San Francisco pollster. Latinos and Asians, who make up 13 percent and 29 percent of the population, respectively, show up in the voting booth at far lower rates; and blacks, who make up 11 percent of San Francisco's population, represent only 8 percent of likely voters, according to Binder. Self-identified gay, lesbian, and bisexual voters constitute 14 percent of likely voters.

It's a highly mobile electorate in considerable flux and under considerable economic pressure. Median household income is $33,414 citywide. Even among the more affluent likely voters, half have household incomes below $50,000 and nearly 70 percent have household incomes below $75,000. Renters, the core of Ammiano's support, make up two-thirds of the population but only 52 percent of likely voters, according to Binder. Brown has more support among blacks and Hispanics; Ammiano is stronger among gays. But the very thing that fuels the Ammiano crusade—his fervor on class issues—may hurt him among the white, heterosexual homeowners who

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vote at rates way above their percentage of the city population. Against that backdrop, Brown holds a significant edge. "Brown needs to make a mistake for Ammiano to win," Binder said. "He's got the ball. But will he fumble?"

Both candidates pledge not to exploit divisions of race or sexual orientation. "The mayor has solid gay support and I have African American support, and I think that's a salute to San Francisco," Ammiano says. "The two communities are not monolithic, by the way. There are a lot of gay black people. Tenants' rights and neighborhood advocacy are issues that don't really know any color or orientation."

Bar-hopping through a conservative, upscale neighborhood on Friday night, Brown demonstrated his old panache—sinking a few pool balls, trading stories about Tiger Woods, wedging in a few words about his warm relationships with President Clinton and California Governor Gray Davis. The offhand comments conveyed the implicit message of his campaign: I'm the pro. I can deliver.

On that balmy November night, with his dinner date cooling her heels on the sidewalk behind us, Brown admitted surprise at the strength of Ammiano's write-in challenge and distress at the low voter turnout in areas where he'd previously drawn strong support, particularly African American neighborhoods. But then the trademark bravado returned, and Brown insisted that he would prevail in December. "Four years ago I beat Frank Jordan here, right in the middle of his constituency. And I'll beat Tom Ammiano, too," he barked.

Brown sped away, taking with him the mood of supreme confidence. Standing with me on the sidewalk, one of the mayor's top campaign aides fretted aloud, "Ammiano's got a real shot. This electorate cannot be spoon-fed. The worst thing we could do is act like we know we have him beat. That's the best way to get our asses handed to us." It wasn't clear anybody had yet delivered this message to the mayor. ■

Why veeps must hold their tongues.

Speak Softly

By Akhil Reed Amar

Suddenly Al Gore can't put enough distance between himself and President Clinton. What began a few months ago as a gentle and carefully worded condemnation of Clinton's promiscuity has swelled into a general rebuke of the president's political persona, culminating in a *New Yorker* interview that appeared last week. "Bill Clinton sees a car going down the street and says, 'What are the political implications of that car?'" Gore told the magazine. "I see a car going down the street and I think, How can we replace the internal-combustion engine on that car?"

As if that weren't enough, *The New York Times* followed with a front-page headline, for a story about a U.N.-dues deal between Clinton and anti-abortion Republicans, that proclaimed, "Gore splits with the White House." The *Times* quoted a senior Gore official who said the vice president had "strong reservations" about the deal and "opposed what the White House ended up doing." The adviser almost certainly spoke with the campaign's blessing. After all, distance from the president is precisely the image Gore's handlers want to project. Separation, they seem to believe, is the only antidote to "Clinton fatigue," and most of the pundits seem to agree.

But the handlers and the pundits need to take the Constitution into account. Politically, shouting out his independence—or even picking a fight with Clinton—might be the best thing Gore could do. But constitutionally it's risky business. A sitting vice president running for president is different from all other contenders. Unlike the others, he could become president at any moment, and so he must not say things that could compromise his delicate role as next in line. History makes clear what's at stake.

Start with the Founding. The vice presidency emerged late in the Philadelphia Convention, largely as a device to grease the presidential selection process. Having Congress directly select the president would make the executive branch too dependent on the legislative branch. But Southerners wouldn't stand for direct election of the president because slave states would get no credit for their human chattel. Thus, the Framers settled on a complex electoral-college scheme—based on the notorious three-fifths compromise—that effectively guaranteed Virginia the most electoral clout even though the state disenfranchised a large fraction of its population. Not surprisingly, Virginians dominated the early presidency, holding the office for 32 of the first 36 years of its existence.

But this system for tallying electoral votes state by state created problems. If each state voted for its favorite son, no winner would emerge, which would throw presidential elections into Congress and weaken the presidency. That's where the vice presidency came in: According to the final Philadelphia plan, each state would cast *two* votes for president, one of which had to go to an out-of-state candidate. To discourage states from simply wasting the second vote, the Constitution provided that the person who came in second in the presidential race would automatically become vice president.

This system did not last long. It was destabilizing to automatically place the president's biggest and perhaps fiercest political rival in the position of number two, a heartbeat away from the top. This awkwardness became readily apparent once George Washington, who had no real rivals, left the presidency after two terms. John Adams won the office in 1796, with Thomas Jefferson coming in second and thereby securing the vice presidency. By 1798, the two men were bitter foes, and the election of 1800 featured the disquieting spectacle of the sitting vice president sharply and publicly challenging the sitting president. Energized by this open feud, political parties began to emerge, polarizing the electorate. Had the partisan frenzy led to an attack on Adams or to his assassination—both imaginable scenarios, given the goings-on in France at the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

time—the Founders' system would have been partly to blame.

In response to the 1800 election, the Twelfth Amendment was adopted. Henceforth, members of the electoral college would vote separately for president and vice president. Thus each national political party would be free to run a two-man ticket clearly designating one candidate for the top slot and a running mate for the number-two position. The amendment's immediate impetus was the confusion arising from the 1800 race: Jefferson and his running mate, Aaron Burr, had technically both been candidates for the presidency, and the formal inability to designate Burr as merely a vice presidential candidate had caused a great deal of mischief. The effect of the change, however, was to redefine the relationship between America's top two officers—quelling the animosity once built into the system. What ultimately emerged under the Twelfth Amendment's umbrella was a closer partnership between presidents and vice presidents.

YET, EVEN WITH this change, the relationship between chief executives and their running mates remained delicate, especially because of the parties' common practice of balancing tickets with men from opposite wings. Indeed, it was only because of the discretion of vice presidents that the new system worked. For example, shortly before his death, Abraham Lincoln proclaimed his openness to black suffrage; his vice president, Andrew Johnson, disagreed but kept mum. Had he publicly blasted Lincoln, Johnson's succession to the presidency upon Lincoln's assassination would have been that much harder for an already divided nation to accept. (According to some historical accounts, John Wilkes Booth was present when Lincoln publicly floated the idea of giving blacks the vote and was horrified by the prospect. Booth also tried to visit Johnson shortly before the assassination, leading some conspiracy theorists to speculate that the two men were in cahoots.)

The next presidential assassination illustrated the problem even more vividly. In 1880, the Republicans balanced a "Mugwump" and a "Stalwart": the top slot went to James Garfield, who seemed open to a professional civil service, and the second spot went to Chester Arthur, who preferred a spoils system. Four months after the inauguration, a disgruntled spoilsman shot Garfield and, upon his arrest, informed the police, "I am a Stalwart and Arthur will be president." In his pocket, police found a letter, addressed to Arthur, making various recommendations for Cabinet reshuffling. Arthur, in fact, knew nothing of this madman and had done little to undercut his president. Had he been sharply and publicly critical, however, Arthur's succession could have led to a serious constitutional crisis.

Presidents can be felled by impeachers as well as by assassins. And so Gore's effusive praise of Clinton on the day of his House impeachment, while politically wounding to the vice president, was constitutionally noble. Imagine if, on that day, Gore (or his staff) had joined the Clinton bashers, even subtly, and then the Senate had gone on to remove the president from office. Presidents who take over after assassinations or impeachments already suffer a legitimacy gap because they were not elected on their own. Any hint that Gore had participated in a palace coup—*et tu*, Al?—would have made his own presidency that much weaker. In fact, at a time of great uncertainty and division, the president would have been a constitutional cripple.

Once again, a quick look at American history clarifies matters. When Congress impeached Johnson in 1868, the vice presidency stood vacant, having been opened up by Johnson's accession. (Prior to the passage of the Twenty-fifth Amendment, which was adopted after John F. Kennedy's assassination, there was no constitutional procedure for filling a vice presidential vacancy.) The man who thus stood next in the line of succession was the Senate president pro tem, Ben Wade. Wade had helped lead the charge against Johnson and was widely rumored to have already picked his Cabinet before voting to convict. Wade's obvious self-dealing offended the public's sensibilities, and, years later, this lingering disgust led to a new statute redefining the rules of presidential succession.

So the first reason for a sitting vice president to hold his tongue is clear enough: he has a unique obligation to do nothing that might destabilize the country or compromise a transition of power. And, if American history has taught us anything, it is that presidential mishaps can happen at any time and without warning. At any moment, the country may need the vice president to smoothly step in.

The second reason for restraint is that the vice president has no independent electoral mandate. Despite the Twelfth Amendment, current election laws do not allow ordinary Americans to vote separately for presidents and vice presidents. Instead, citizens cast a single ballot for a joint ticket. Thus, a vice president serves not because Americans voted for him personally but solely because he was handpicked by his running mate, for whom the people did vote. When a vice president criticizes the president, therefore, he risks pulling the legitimacy rug out from under himself.

WHAT IS CALLED for, then, is a delicate constitutional etiquette balancing the roles of vice president and presidential aspirant. Gore must be Clinton's partner today and his own man tomorrow. In this delicate balance, he may carefully distance himself from Clinton—for instance, geographically. (By moving his campaign headquarters to Nashville, he signals that, although he covets the Oval Office, he is content to wait until 2001 to move in; until then, it's Clinton's show. Historically, many vice presidents have spent most of their time far from Washington, D.C. Indeed, Walter Mondale was the first vice president to have a permanent office in the West Wing, and Spiro Agnew's staff didn't even have White House passes.) Gore is also free not to push for certain administration policies; nothing in our Constitution or our traditions requires him to work for the president. But that doesn't mean he may openly and sharply criticize Clinton. Al Gore has the right to be the best presidential candidate possible and the duty to offer us his personal vision. But, until he is elected president in his own right, he must also remain a loyal vice president who could, if necessary, insure the peaceful and legitimate transition of power at the very moment our government is weakest: when a president goes down. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The pulse of the world from the heart of the nation.

Don't miss a thing. Subscribe *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*. And be privy to astute analysis of the policies, issues, debates and developments that make the world's pulse race.

You get the inside word. Straight talk from the political pundits. In-depth coverage of the powers that be in Congress, the White House and abroad. Brilliant observations of the day's most significant political events. A roundup of rare, resourceful commentary on the Administration's every move.

This special weekly edition of *The Post* is read widely with the same high regard as our daily paper. It's full of exclusive reports and expert opinion to help uncover the big-picture implications of today's agenda. It's written by individuals who are uniquely qualified to interpret Washington affairs with remarkable insight. Investigative reporters like Bob Woodward. Observers like Jim Hoagland and Robert Samuelson. Plus guest authorities in every field.

Week in and week out, *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition* keeps you abreast of our ever-swirling political scene. You get...

Capital Politics. Penetrating assessments of the government's most controversial matters from the Pulitzer Prize-winning dean of American political analysts, David Broder.

Save 62% off the cover price!

surges in the parties, voters, ethics, elections, campaigns, referendum, committees, lobbies and policies of America

The Global Pulse. Amazing stories and investigative reports from the diplomatic front. We identify and examine the ripple effects of events as far away as the Persian Gulf to Peru, the Soviet Union to South Africa.

The Economic Pulse. Forecasts and appraisals that probe beneath the surface of such weighty economic matters as energy, credit, the stock market, international finance, banking, labor, trade and more.

Commentary. Lively debate and provocative ideas from George Will, Tom Edsall, Dan Balz and other foremost political thinkers and writers.

Editorials. Trenchant views from our eye-opening op-ed page and the amusing visual observation of Herblock, the three time Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist.

The Government Pulse. Stay on top of new directions in law, health care, defense and the environment. For example: AIDS prevention campaigns and federal funding. Global warming's price tag. The potential for postwar terrorism. The perils of mandatory retirement. And more.

Book World. The most important new books are subjected to candid, stimulating reviews by well-known scholars, opinion leaders and best-selling authors themselves.

What Americans Think. Enjoy fascinating poll results on timely topics: Presidential approval ratings, civil rights trends, military matters, lifestyle habits and more.

Science Lab. Study the outcome of revealing reports, special research experiments and bold, new discoveries in such fields as psychology, medicine and conversations.

Indeed, The Washington Post National Weekly Edition *imparts a wealth of knowledge on politics, government, the economy, international affairs, business and industry. Go ahead. Read it for information. Use it to make decisions.*

(Complete, clip and mail coupon today.)

Save 62%!

NATIONAL WEEKLY EDITION

Subscription Savings Form **The Washington Post**

❑ Yes! Start my one-year subscription (52 issues) to ***The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*** for only $39.00. That's a savings of $9.00 off the basic subscription rate and $62.40 off the newsstand price.

Name

Address

City

Satisfaction Guaranteed or your money back on all unmailed issues

❑ Payment Enclosed
❑ Bill me later.

Complete and mail to:

The Washington Post National Weekly Edition
P.O. Box 37167
Boone, IA 50037-2167

Allow 4-6 weeks for first issue to arrive.

JWAM993

Subscribe now and Save 62% off the cover price.

Complete and return the coupon today.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

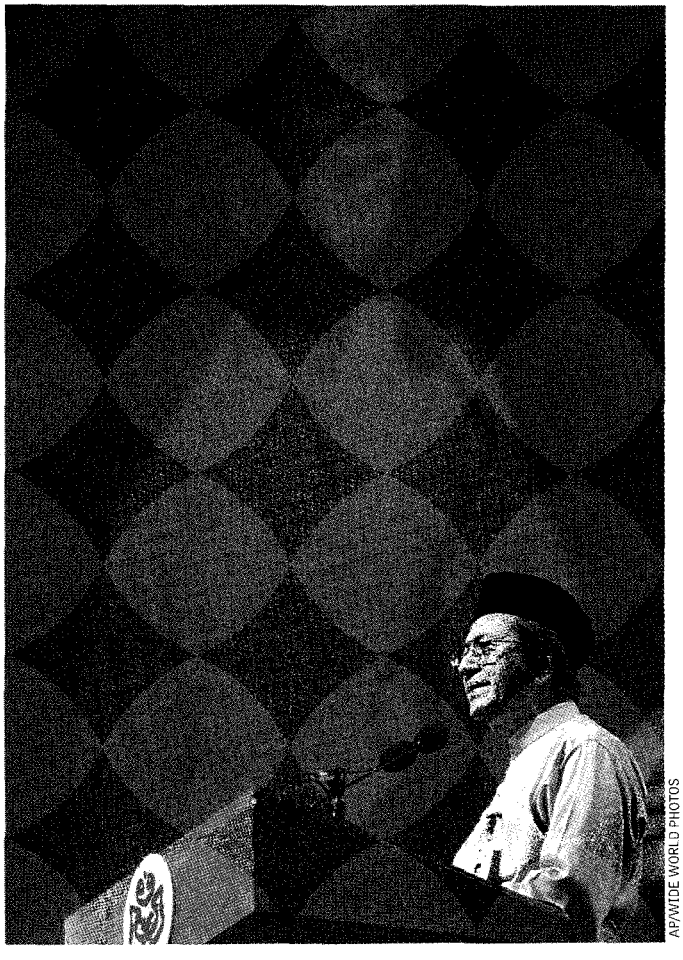
Kuala Lumpur Dispatch

The Plot Thickens

By ROMESH RATNESAR

BY ALL RIGHTS, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad should be out of a job. When the Asian financial crisis hit in 1997, Mahathir's response was to blame his country's troubles on Jewish currency traders, impose currency controls, and, as a result, forgo the assistance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Soon thereafter, he destroyed whatever shred of confidence foreign investors had left by jailing his charismatic—and Western-leaning—former deputy and finance minister, Anwar Ibrahim, on trumped-up charges of corruption and sodomy. The Malaysian economy went into a tailspin. Meanwhile, Mahathir lavished $8 billion on a new capital city south of Kuala Lumpur, complete with preposterously grand government buildings and a luxurious residence roughly twice the size of the White House.

Yet, notwithstanding a protest this September by thousands of opposition-party supporters commemorating the anniversary of Anwar's arrest, Mahathir remains firmly in control. In fact, so confident is he of his position that he just scheduled the first general election since the crisis, to be held November 29. And, though the opposition parties—headed by Anwar's wife—may gain some parliamentary seats, Mahathir is widely expected to win the election by a landslide.



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Mahathir's staying power can be partly explained by the recent upswing in Malaysia's economy. Though its recovery has not been nearly as impressive as Thailand's or South Korea's and though underlying problems with Malaysia's crony capitalism have not been addressed, things are clearly looking up: the nation's GDP rose by four percent in the second quarter of this year, and its reserves are up 60 percent since August 1998. Perhaps most significantly, there was no large-scale capital flight—as had been widely predicted—after Malaysia lifted its currency controls this September.

But there is something else behind Mahathir's iron grip on power. When Mahathir rails—as he does in his new book, *A New Deal for Asia*—about the West's plan for "domination" of the continent, his rants fall on receptive ears. Malaysia is a country of conspiracy theorists. Mahathir is simply the best-known.

Government officials may be the worst conspiracy theorists. Over tea one afternoon, a member of the Malaysian Senate was unwavering in his insistence that the CIA assassinated John F. Kennedy and snuffed Marilyn Monroe. He attributed the financial crisis solely to a U.S. plot to enfeeble the rising Asian countries and assert dominance over them. "The U.S. is attempting a second colonization of Asia," he said.

But such talk is hardly limited to members of the government elite. One prominent Kuala Lumpur engineer I met ardently defended the government's purge of Anwar and his backers and echoed its hostility to the West. When I asked him about the construction of the new capital, he cut me off. "Let me guess—some American newspaper made it sound like a huge waste of money and another example of the prime minister's corruption," he said, then launched into a diatribe about the ignorance of Western journalists and the buying of American politics by multinational corporations. Anwar, continued the engineer, is actually a stooge of the United States, which is actively trying to subvert the Mahathir regime and install a quiescent government. I asked him why the United States would possibly want to do this. "The U.S. is trying to take control of Asian governments so it can form a security ring to encircle China," he answered.

Mahathir feeds on such anti-American paranoia. His rejection of IMF aid and his imposition of currency controls have played well. And last year he turned Vice President Al Gore, who had castigated Mahathir for jailing Anwar and suppressing political liberties, into an effective foil. Mahathir also does his best to foment anti-Western prejudices in his own writing, asserting in his new book that "Western societies today are riddled with single-parent fam-

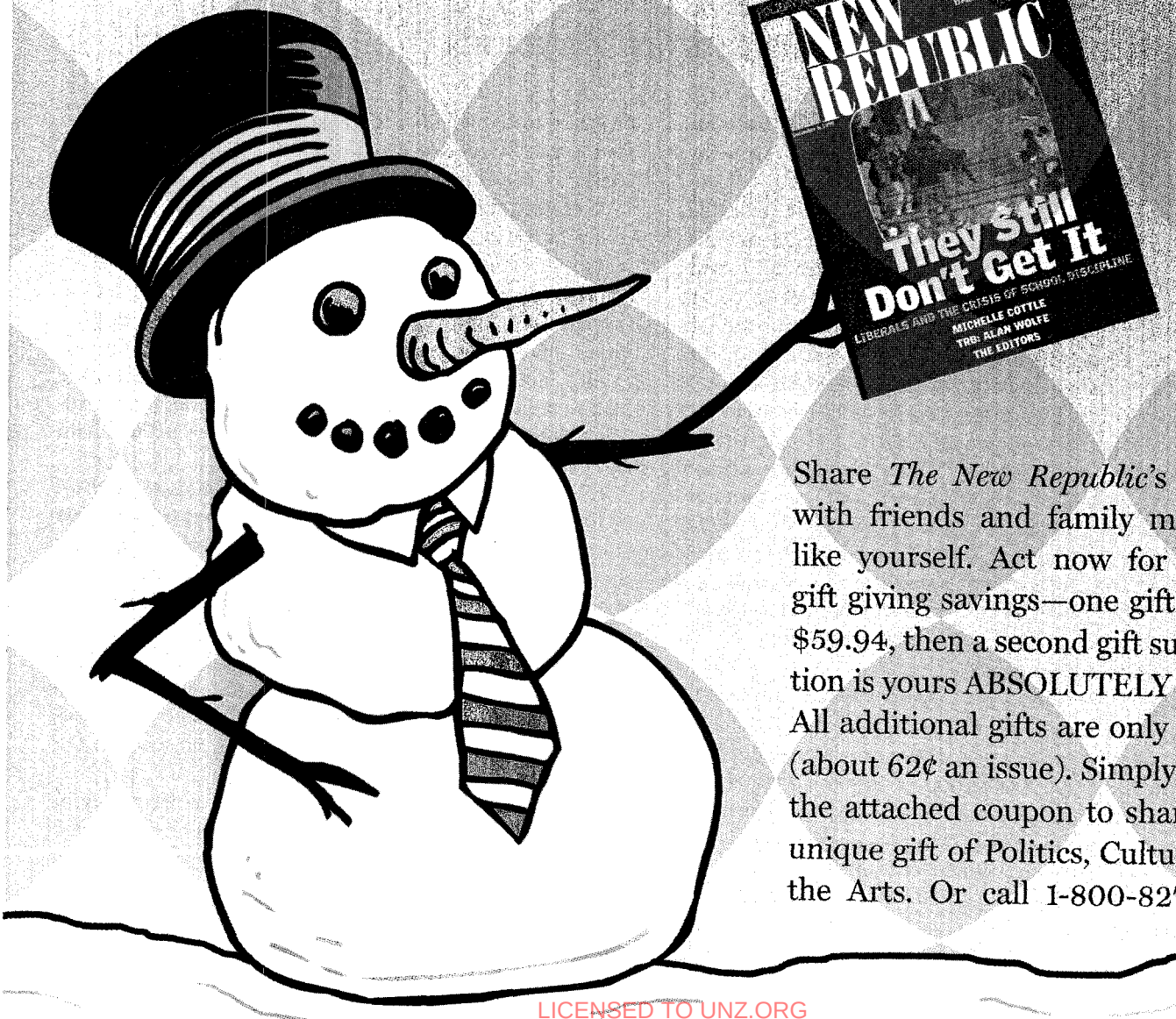
ROMESH RATNESAR is a staff writer at *Time* magazine.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Give the Gift of Politics, Culture, and the Arts....

THE NEW REPUBLIC

It's provocative and exciting, skeptical and quotable. It always fits. It's never returned. It lasts a whole year. It's guaranteed to please. And when you order several, you'll save 50% off the regular price.



Share *The New Republic*'s insight with friends and family members like yourself. Act now for special gift giving savings—one gift is only $59.94, then a second gift subscription is yours ABSOLUTELY FREE! All additional gifts are only $29.97 (about 62¢ an issue). Simply fill out the attached coupon to share your unique gift of Politics, Culture, and the Arts. Or call 1-800-827-1289.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ilies, with homosexuality, with cohabitation, with unrestrained avarice, and, of course, with disrespect for others."

And yet there would be little need for such talk if some Western values were not gaining a foothold. The tendency of older Malaysians, like Mahathir, to see malign forces from outside the country conspiring against them evinces a real fear that, for the first time, their authority is being challenged by a younger generation within Malaysia. Dave, a 26-year-old investment banker, told me that many Malaysian businesses have started to adopt American management techniques, placing greater emphasis on talent and creativity than on seniority and deference. "We want to copy what the U.S. has done," he said. In fact, the government, unaware of the potential for unintended consequences, is blithely building, on plantation land near the new capital, a brand-new, high-tech city that it hopes will become Asia's Silicon Valley. Like their Silicon Valley role models, Malaysia's young, business-savvy cyber-entrepreneurs will eventually come to demand a society—and maybe a politics—that is hipper, looser, and more permissive. Which is to say, more like America.

As we drove through downtown Kuala Lumpur, I asked Dave what he thought of his country's recent political turmoil. "I think it has actually been good for Malaysia," he said. "I didn't pay any attention to politics before the Anwar trial. But this has forced my generation to pay attention, to get involved. I don't know whether I'll vote for the opposition or not—but I know that I'm going to vote." Indeed, Mahathir seems concerned that the Daves of Malaysia will go with the opposition. He chose the early November 29 election date not only to give the opposition less time to campaign but because in January an additional 650,000 young voters will join the rolls. Of course, the timing need not be the result of conspiracy. It could be just a coincidence. But don't tell that to Malaysians. ■

A parable of modern radio.

Bad Signal

By JOSEPH GESSERT *and* SHANNON MATTERN

WITH A POPULATION larger than 60,000, Asheville, North Carolina, isn't exactly a small town. But, from the day it started playing rock and roll in 1994, Asheville's WZLS was very much a small-town operation. It was a radio station that still substituted listener requests for preselected, market-tested tunes, a locally owned broadcaster in an era dominated by national conglomerates. "ZLS" stood for "Zeb Lee's Station," and the Lee family, which had operated an Asheville AM station for 47 years before starting WZLS, was a staple of the community. In its first few years of broadcasting, WZLS raised funds for a van for an Asheville teen paralyzed in an automobile accident and for an orphanage-construction project and produced a local-music compilation album benefiting river-cleanup efforts. As *Asheville Citizen-Times* scribe Tony Kiss wrote of the new station, "Few stations strike that solid emotional bond with their listeners. But WZLS—a genuine, local, mom-and-pop operation—has made that connection. All the announcers are real friends."

The friendship, alas, would be short-lived. In 1995 the Federal Communications Commission revoked the Lees' broadcasting-license approval. Four years later—after many rounds of teeter-totter litigation, a grassroots uprising by townsfolk, and an act of Congress—the Lees will apparently be forced to sign off 96.5 FM for good, giving way to a radio station run by Liberty Productions, a North Carolina firm backed by corporate giant Cumulus Media.

Protecting small, community-based operations was once central to the FCC's mission. But that was before politicians, seeking greater diversity in broadcasting, instructed the commission to give minorities preference in granting broadcast licenses. And, even more importantly, before another group of politicians, seeking to deregulate the telecommunications industry, insisted that broadcast licenses go to the highest bidders. Both groups still prattle on about their devotion to local radio. But, on the ground, they are making it an endangered species.

Zeb Lee, family patriarch, hit the airwaves in 1938. In 1947, he founded WSKY-AM, and, for the next 47 years, he broadcast from the stands of the Asheville High School football stadium on every fall Friday. Zeb met the future Betty Lee when she called in to request a Perry Como tune. When they married, Zeb found he had gained not only a wife but a production manager, too. Zeb and Betty begat Barry and Brian, who grew up behind the microphones. WSKY sponsored minor-league baseball promotions, broadcast lost-pet announcements, and generally maintained a strong presence in the community.

In 1987, when the FCC opened a new FM frequency in Asheville, the Lees were among the handful of petitioners. The guidelines for the commission's decision were clear and long-standing: to serve (as proclaimed in a 1928 statement by the Federal Radio Commission) the "interest, the conve-

JOSEPH GESSERT and SHANNON MATTERN are staff researchers for the Project on Media Ownership at New York University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nience, and the necessity of the listening public" rather than the interests of broadcasters or advertisers. As a 1950 FCC statement further explained, "It is as if the people of a community should own a station and turn it over to the best man in sight with this injunction: 'Manage this station in our interest.'" FCC policy explicitly favored owners who were personally involved in their stations' day-to-day business, and it favored broadcasters who owned just one station—as opposed to large conglomerates—on the theory that many small and diverse owners would be better for American culture and democracy. Later, the FCC began giving preference to minority owners—again, in the interest of promoting diversity among broadcasters.

The Lee clan didn't qualify for a minority preference, but they certainly met the rest of the FCC's criteria. In 1990 the commission, citing the family's record of "splendid stewardship," gave them initial approval for a new frequency. Competitors—most of them investment groups rather than broadcasters—appealed, but over the next three years an FCC review board reaffirmed the decision three times. So in 1993 the FCC, following standard practice, granted the Lees a station-construction permit and set a deadline: the station had to be ready for operation by October 30, 1994, or the Lees would forfeit their license. To fulfill the FCC's single-station ownership preference, the Lees had to sell WSKY—a sale the commission approved in March 1994. Betty became public service manager of the new station, while Brian oversaw programming and Barry served as operations manager.

WZLS went on the air in July 1994 with a mix of popular contemporary rock, older classics, occasional eclectic numbers, and a heavy dose of listener requests. Listeners donated dusty LPs and favorite CDs to fill gaps in the station's collection. As Asheville's only rock station, WZLS was popular from the get-go, and after less than a year on the air the station ranked third in the area's Arbitron rankings. Having fulfilled the requirements of their conditional permit, the Lees applied for a permanent radio license on August 1.

BUT THERE WOULD be no permanent license. In 1994, the FCC froze its permanent-licensing procedures in the wake of a 1993 court decision, *Bechtel* v. *FCC*, that questioned the legitimacy of the agency's criteria for doling out licenses. Meanwhile, in Asheville, appeals for WZLS's frequency still loomed from the Biltmore Forest Radio, Inc. (BFRI) investment consortium, whose investors included North Carolina Representative Mel Watt and Darcel Grimes, a news anchor for Asheville's WLOS-TV. Watt and Grimes are both black, and BFRI presented itself as an ethnically diverse enterprise that would bring "diversity and fresh air" into the Asheville market. With permanent-license proceedings still suspended, the FCC ordered the Lees to share time with BFRI or get off the air—pending the establishment of new licensing guidelines.

The Lees refused. A legal battle ensued, and on June 2, 1997, the two stations broadcast simultaneously for the day on 96.5 FM—competing, quite literally, for the radios of Asheville. The FCC threatened the Lees with a penalty of $20,000 per day, and that night WZLS signed off, yielding the airwaves to BFRI's station, WZRQ. Ron McKee, manager of the Asheville Tourists minor-league baseball team, summed it all up: "They gave Zeb a permit, told him to go ahead, and he set out his money in good faith. Then they turned around and said, 'Oops, we changed our mind.' Is that fair?"

In fact, McKee's outrage, though justified, doesn't capture the full irony of the situation. BFRI was supposed to bring diversity—in particular, more racial diversity—to the Asheville radio market. Instead, it subcontracted its air-time to a radio conglomerate called Capstar Broadcasting—which already controlled 82 percent of the local-radio advertising revenue in Asheville and 40 percent of the audience. When Capstar eventually pulled out of the deal, BFRI enlisted Style Broadcasting of Panama City, Florida, to program the station full-time. Style's programming director C.J. Ryan arrived with the latest in "completely self-sufficient" broadcast technology—programmable 21 days in advance with a "well-researched playlist of only the most popular and familiar stuff"; i.e., the same fare you'd find on any mainstream rock station. There was little for WZRQ's deejays to do but push buttons and add sporadic commentary. "We didn't really go into this to run a radio station," Watt said later. "We were going to be investors, not managers."

THE CITIZENS OF Asheville did not take all this lying down. They flooded congressional offices with phone calls and letters supporting the Lees. North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms—never shy about wielding his influence over the appointments process—threatened to block William Kennard's appointment as FCC chairman. But, Helms's efforts notwithstanding, the Lees' fate was being sealed elsewhere in the Senate chamber. In 1997, Arizona Senator John McCain attached to the Balanced Budget Bill a rider establishing new rules for license allocation. Under the new rules, the FCC would auction all new radio frequencies to the highest bidder, thus eliminating the "speculation" inherent in the proceedings of yore.

The McCain rider epitomized a new approach to the control of broadcasting rights—an approach foreshadowed a year earlier by the passage of the Telecommunications Act, a massive deregulatory bill whose chief aim was to increase industry competition. The McCain rider, like the Telecommunications Act, seemed to define "public interest" as "consumer interest." The newly efficient licensing proceedings would benefit the U.S. Treasury and promote a robust communications industry, thus bringing more options to the consumer—or so the thinking went.

In theory, the FCC could still help small-business broadcasters compete. The commission offers a 25 to 35 percent bidding credit to "entrant bidders"—those applicants with few or no other media properties. But in practice this safeguard rarely worked: there was no real way to prevent small-time operators who qualified for the preferences from winning their licenses and then "flipping" the stations over to national conglomerates—who could serve as silent partners during the bidding process.

So, at a time when the Telecommunications Act was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sparking colossal media mergers—Clear Channel Communications Inc. and AMFM Inc., MCI WorldCom and Sprint, Viacom and CBS—the McCain rider changed the licensing process to favor bidders with greater financial resources. The result has been, not surprisingly, a rise in media concentration and a fall in local ownership. In Asheville, for example, the only locally based TV station, WLOS-TV, is owned by Sinclair Communications of Baltimore—which also controls two of the top ten radio stations in the Asheville market, as well as more than 100 radio and TV stations nationwide. Clear Channel Communications/AMFM Inc. owns four of Asheville's top ten radio stations and 830 stations in all. The area's cable company, Charter Communications Inc., belongs to Microsoft founder Paul Allen. Even the daily newspaper, the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, is owned by Gannett, home of *USA Today*.

Nationwide, small-time TV, cable, and radio operators have been squeezed out—which, in the end, is exactly what happened to the Lees. In December 1997 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia gave the Lee family a brief reprieve, reinstating their interim station license pending an auction for control of the frequency. Then came the auction. The Lee family bid $643,500; Liberty Productions offered $1.5 million. Liberty is a small local firm that, after submitting its license application, accepted financial backing from Cumulus Media. With 261 stations in 48 U.S. cities and the Caribbean, Cumulus is the nation's seventh-largest radio company by revenue and second-largest by number of stations. Betty, Barry, and Brian Lee vow to continue fighting in the spirit of Zeb, who passed away a year ago. Sadly, the federal commitment to protecting broadcasters like Zeb Lee seems to have vanished from the scene as well. ■

The education of Gene Sperling.

Trapped

By MATTHEW MILLER

IT'S 4:30 IN the afternoon on a Wednesday in mid-October, and, as on most of the more than 2,000 days that Gene Sperling has worked for Bill Clinton, the schedule has exploded. The president's press conference started late and ended later, which meant that Sperling, head of the White House's National Economic Council (NEC), had to scrap lunch with a Democratic senator and leave a gaggle of European trade officials cooling their heels. Now, at the conference table in his wood-paneled West Wing lair, the president's top economic adviser is working the phone. Sperling instructs an aide how to navigate the latest bump in talks with Republicans on the banking bill. He plots Clinton's upcoming visit to Newark with a New Jersey multimillionaire. As plans for this evening's budget strategy meeting take shape (for Sperling there is always a night shift), Sperling, who will turn 41 next month, seems in his element. It's been a year since Clinton was humiliated and then impeached, when the good fight Sperling came to Washington to wage seemed near its end. Now the capital is full of possibilities again. "Policy is back!" Sperling announces, to no one in particular.

But not in the way he once hoped. On Sperling's wall is a framed copy of the 1994 State of the Union address. "To Gene," reads the inscription in the president's looping hand, "whose dreams and ideas are here." Many of those dreams are still trapped under glass.

MATTHEW MILLER, a syndicated columnist, is a Los Angeles-based senior fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center.

They were trapped initially, of course, by deficits. Clinton roared into office waving a Sperling-drafted pledge to "put people first" to the tune of $50 billion per year in new public investment; but, as Bob Woodward and countless others have detailed, a tidal wave of red ink brought this plan to naught. That straitjacket, however, has now been overcome—thanks to tough choices, GOP prodding, Alan Greenspan's steady hand, and a dose of good luck. The deficit is gone, replaced by an era of surplus.

Yet, ironically, Sperling's long-deferred plans are now imprisoned by a straitjacket of his own making: the call to "save Social Security first." This strategy, aimed at preventing new spending or new tax cuts so the surplus can, in theory, be used to shore up the retirement system, was Sperling's brainchild. It has brilliantly put the Republicans on the defensive, setting the stage for yet another Clinton budget triumph. But it has also meant that, over the past weeks of budget negotiations, Sperling has devoted his considerable talents to assuring that virtually the entire surplus is locked away to pay down the national debt—leaving pennies for the education, health, and anti-poverty initiatives that might help the millions who are left out of today's prosperity. In the seven years since Sperling came to Washington, what began as fiscal limits have become ideological ones. The center of political gravity has shifted so radically that today, with the money finally available, a Democratic administration can't even discuss the bold new public investment that it successfully championed during an era of scarcity. And, in the bitterest of ironies, Gene Sperling, once the architect of that sweeping liberal agenda, is now its undertaker.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As Robert Rubin's deputy on the NEC, Sperling entered the White House in 1993 as the liberals' "keeper of the campaign flame." He even went toe-to-toe with Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen to more than double the administration's boost in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). But, from the beginning, Sperling was a realist. He figured out, as then-Secretary of Labor Robert Reich never did, that administration liberals must either jump on the deficit-reduction bandwagon or abandon any hope of real influence. At first, Sperling thought of deficit reduction mostly as a political imperative, a prerequisite if Clinton were to avoid being "Carterized" as an undisciplined spender. But, as the administration's economic plan bore fruit, Sperling saw that lower deficits, by sparking private investment, did more for the disadvantaged than he and others on the left had imagined. Lower interest rates and steady expansion forced businesses to reach into the fringes of the labor market, bringing the unskilled into the workforce and training them more effectively than any government program could. And, watching congressional sausage-making up close, Sperling also began to question whether the political process could direct public investments wisely.

NEWSMAKERS

In any event, the 1994 GOP takeover made such debates academic. Clinton spent the next two years playing rope-a-dope with Newt Gingrich in hopes of living to fight another day. As Dick Morris terrorized and divided the White House staff, Sperling turned Morris's sound bites into policy and kept the Clinton economic team at peace. In return, a grateful president tapped him to lead the NEC for the second term. Sperling was 38.

By this point, bigger-name liberals had bailed out. Reich wrote a memoir blasting Clinton, an Oxford pal, as a triangulating sellout. George Stephanopoulos cashed in on his celebrity and plotted his own nasty kiss-and-tell. Why did Sperling stay? "I've always thought we were fighting the good fight," he tells me, "even in divided government." Rebuffing Gingrich's drive to scrap basic guarantees of food stamps and Medicaid, he explains, had as big an impact (albeit in defensive terms) as expanding the EITC. What, Sperling seems to imply, was the nobler alternative? Taking your marbles and going home?

The budget deal Sperling helped negotiate in 1997 makes his point. The year began poisonously, after the White House's shameless Medicare demagoguery helped Clinton win reelection. Now Clinton wanted a deal to finish off the deficit. After the inauguration, Sperling shrewdly suggested that Clinton unilaterally increase the amount of Medicare cuts he would accept, and the gesture worked, bringing a thaw that eventually led to negotiations. Democrats had to swallow capital-gains-tax and estate-tax relief that favored the rich. But they won $24 billion to expand health coverage for poor kids and create HOPE scholarships that made most community colleges free, plus billions more to reverse the welfare bill's attacks on immigrants. They also got the deal's $500-per-child tax credit extended to 13 million low-income children the GOP meant to exclude. Sitting across the table from Gingrich and Trent Lott, Sperling, with his push for the last five million kids, nearly derailed the talks. But he won.

Perhaps even more importantly, the budget deal got the Clintonites out of the box they had been in since 1993. Within a few months, in late 1997, forecasts began showing honest-to-goodness budget surpluses, and on a scale unthinkable a few years earlier. For the first time since Clinton's election, there was cash to fund big new public investments or to ramp up others that had received only token sums. But the Republicans who controlled Congress were, of course, hostile to new spending; they'd want to return surpluses to voters via huge tax cuts skewed toward the wealthy. Meanwhile, Social Security and Medicare soon faced a potentially bankrupting rendezvous with the baby-boomers' retirement.

Sperling responded by holding a series of secret meetings. The result was Clinton's call to "save Social Security first"—i.e., to leave the surpluses untouched (and therefore use them to pay down the debt) until the retirement program's long-term solvency was assured. The Sperling-orchestrated plan was "substantively sound, politically brilliant, and didn't leak, which is almost unheard-of in Washington," recalls Michael Waldman, then Clinton's chief speechwriter. It was Sperling at his best.

Yet Sperling's best meant that Clinton would forgo his last real chance to achieve the large goals he had sought office to accomplish. Here was a president who pooh-poohed the deficit in his first campaign now saying we had to go further and actually pay down the debt. This while evidence of the public-investment gap mounted, even amid macroeconomic good times. One in four children still lived in poverty; only two in five eligible kids got Head Start; and 44 million Americans had no health insurance, five million more than when Clinton tried, imperfectly, to address the issue in his first term.

Clinton's odyssey, and that of his alter ego, Sperling, had come to this. They knew the Republicans would never accept large public investments. They feared that if Clinton tried to use the surplus for his wish list, there would be no stopping a feeding frenzy of GOP tax cuts and mountains of pork from both parties. Clinton thought Republicans just might want a deal on Social Security and Medicare. The GOP stood to gain, after all, if a Democrat like Clinton pulled a Nixon-to-China and made the concessions that would keep his party from continuing to demagogue the issue in election after election. The administration could still use non-surplus sources like a tobacco tax to fund modest initiatives (such as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reducing class sizes) and hope the political equation after 2000 would leave room to aim higher. In the meantime, debt reduction would boost private savings, investment, and growth in ways that better positioned the nation to cope with aging boomers. It would also lower the feds' $215 billion in annual interest payments, freeing up precious budgetary space down the road.

It was a complex, ambitious strategy for a sixth-year president facing a hostile Congress, packaged in an unanswerable slogan and meant to keep the case for public investment alive while casting Clinton as the savior of his party's signature programs. Who knows? Given a clear shot, it might even have worked. Then Ken Starr's men confronted Monica Lewinsky at the Ritz-Carlton and started scripting a different historical legacy from the one Clinton (and Sperling) intended.

THE STANDARD LEFTY narrative of the Clinton administration—which blames the lack of a liberal agenda on administration timidity and duplicity—is too crude. The truth is that Clinton had no choice but to tackle the deficit when he entered office. The budget gap's drain on the economy and the prospect of its continued spiraling made any other course irresponsible; it was not some sop to Wall Street. Then, in the wake of the 1994 blowout, Clinton had little choice but to adapt to the Republican "revolution"—or else we'd likely be governed today by President Dole. The fact that Republicans are now coalescing around George W. Bush and not Gingrich testifies to Clinton's victory in retreat. By throwing overboard so much liberal baggage, Clinton may even have prepared the way for renewed government activism on a scale even larger than he proposed in 1992.

"What we did for eight years," Mario Cuomo tells me in speech-like cadences, "was lift the albatrosses one at a time." Democrats were big spenders? They've solved the deficit problem beyond anyone's wildest dreams. Democrats were soft on crime? Crime is down dramatically, helped by Clinton's 100,000 new cops. Democrats coddled the poor? Welfare has been reformed; enrollment has plummeted. "They have made a case for economic credibility," continues the former governor. "Now, at last, our hands have been freed to do the real work!"

By this logic, the real measure of Clinton's and Sperling's work won't come until after 2000, when we learn whether the terms of this administration's survival made the world safe for progressives to think big again. But there's the rub. Sperling's "save Social Security first" battle cry has proven so politically potent that, like Richard Darman's 1990 spending caps, it could shape public debate on resource allocation for years. For three decades both parties spent Social Security surpluses without a qualm (and, for arcane but uncontroversial reasons, without hurting the retirement system one bit). In the budget just put to bed, however, both made a fetish of saying that trillions in future Social Security surpluses shouldn't be touched. Once you realize, as many experts note, that spending a good chunk of these surpluses would have no effect on Social Security's health and that, contrary to both parties' hype, there may not turn out to be any surplus beyond what Social Security brings in, the result is depressing. The Sperling-built straitjacket may prove as constricting in the next decade as the Reagan straitjacket was in this one.

The new straitjacket is largely intellectual. In Clinton's early days there were robust internal administration debates over the relative merits of public investment versus private. At the margin, economic advisers would ask, what does more to promote long-run growth with equity—an additional $10 billion of deficit reduction (and thus private investment) or an extra $10 billion devoted to early childhood education and school repair? As it turns out, Clinton has lifted private investment dramatically by turning a five percent of GDP deficit into a 1.4 percent surplus, while public investment as a share of the economy has dropped. Yet the effect of "saving Social Security first," with the bipartisan debt-reduction craze it has spawned, is to preemptively rule out this debate over public versus private investment at precisely the moment it must be renewed.

THE REASON, AS Sperling should know, is that time is short. Like many liberals, he's a fan of universal preschool and broader health coverage. He authored Clinton's creative (and underreported) call for highly progressive Universal Savings Accounts that would use $30 billion a year to help lower-income Americans build nest eggs. But if, as seems likely, there is little non-Social Security surplus available for such goodies and the huge Social Security surplus is off-limits, liberals will either have to punt on public investment again or call for new taxes to pay for it—which is madness at a time when the government's cup runneth over. What's more, after the next presidential term, it may be all Washington can do to cope with the onslaught of 78 million graying boomers. If the unfinished progressive agenda isn't addressed now, in other words, there may be no later.

It's possible that, if the Democrats hold the presidency and win the House in 2000, the terms of debate will change and a progressive agenda will once again become thinkable. But that would require not simply a change from Republican to Democratic congressional control but also a change in the Democratic Party itself. And, as of now, there is no sign of such a change. Al Gore is hoping to win the Democratic nomination from Bill Bradley by discrediting universal health coverage as a dangerous pipe dream. And, while he may be right that Bradley doesn't know how to pay for his plan, the result of Gore's strategy may be to bury the very idea of nonincremental progressive initiatives for which Clinton's long odyssey should have set the stage. If it does, it will hardly matter whether the Democrats recapture the House, because timidity will reign.

Which, as Gene Sperling knows well, can be tough on the soul. "I have my own little personal thing," he told me. "I always think of Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor [his hometown]. A lot of times we have an initiative [for disadvantaged kids] where there may be a need for one and a half million slots and you get seventy-five thousand. It's really pretty small compared to the need, but when you think about filling up Crisler Arena four times with people you help, that seems like that's pretty good for a year's work.

"I go back and forth," Sperling says. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why Decatur chose race war.

Itching for a Fight

By MICHELLE COTTLE

DECATUR, ILLINOIS

A LARGE WOODEN sign greets you as you cross the city limits on the eastern edge of town: WELCOME TO DECATUR, ILL. PRIDE OF THE PRAIRIE. To the side stands a smaller sign, white, with the word RACISM printed in large black letters. Through the word slices a bright red slash, and above it appears the phrase NOT IN OUR TOWN. Identical signs adorn most of the major roads into Decatur, but they don't exactly serve their intended purpose. In fact, their effect is akin to that of posting signs stating the community's opposition to ax murder. By answering a question that the entrants to most cities do not ask, the signs make the first-time visitor wonder whether Decatur doth protest too much—particularly when your first trip into town happens to be on the cool, clear morning of Friday, November 12, as residents brace for one of the most racially charged episodes in Decatur's 170-year history.

Jesse Jackson is coming to town. Again. He has been here off and on for the past two weeks, protesting the local school board's now nationally dissected decision to expel six young black men (a seventh left the school before the final vote) for starting a brawl at a high school football game. Jackson has already led numerous meetings and demonstrations and one march in Decatur; a second, bigger march is planned for the coming Sunday. Close to 20 busloads of (mostly black) supporters from Chicago are expected to attend. In turn, a group of Klansmen from Butler, Indiana, has—at the request of local supporters—scheduled a counterdemonstration at nearby Nelson Park. White supremacist organizations have threatened violence if Jackson doesn't butt out of local affairs. Members of the World Church of the Creator, the white supremacist group whose leader, Matt Hale, lives just up Route 121 in East Peoria, have been scattering their wacko literature all around the city. The Illinois state police are being called in, along with the local ATF. Rumors are flying—the Klan is staying at the local Holiday Inn; President Clinton is flying into town. It promises to be an eventful weekend.

Perhaps it was inevitable that the expulsion controversy would become a race thing. The seven young men are black, the school board is predominantly white, and the expulsion vote split along racial lines. But racial showdowns never spring from whole cloth. They must serve someone's purpose; a group, or groups, must feel that open conflict is better than the alternatives. And in Decatur, it turns out, the alternatives seemed bleak enough that many whites and many blacks, for different reasons, were desperate enough to give confrontation a try. Seven young men in a football stadium gave them the opening, and they took it.

DECATUR IS A town that has seen better times. Ken Smithmeir, president of Decatur Memorial Hospital and head of the county's Economic Development Corporation, admits that. He didn't grow up here, but he knows all about the days when the factories ran at full tilt and kids could come right out of high school and get great jobs. Decatur has always been a blue-collar town, a manufacturing oasis in the middle of farm country. Firestone is a major employer. So are Caterpillar and grain processor A.E. Staley. Agriculture giant Archer Daniels Midland is headquartered here. Giant smokestacks send great clouds of steam billowing across the surrounding prairie. At certain times of day, the smell of soybeans being processed blankets the area.

The 1980s were not kind to the community, says Smithmeir. "Decatur's economy was smacked when what people referred to as the Rust Belt was smacked. There was economic pressure internationally. A lot of downsizing occurred." Ugly strikes broke out at many of the large factories.

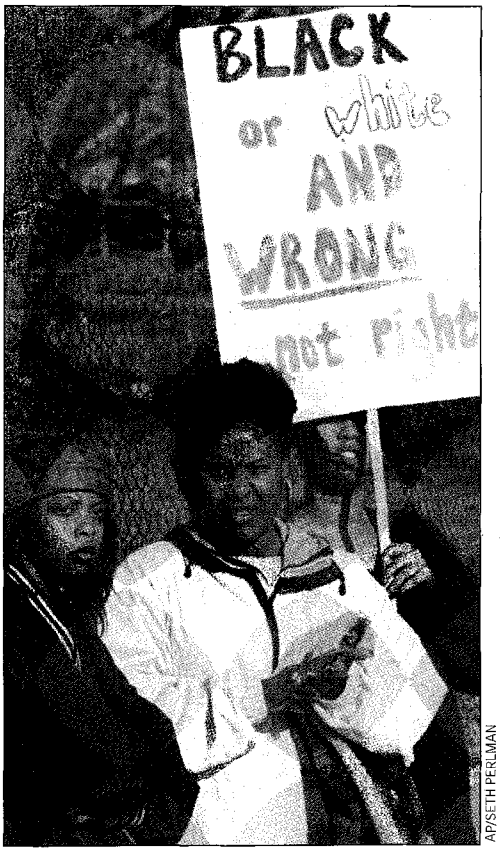
Then, in the mid-'90s, the regional economy started to rebound, to everyone's relief. "You go around now and there's a lot of construction," says Smithmeir. "New houses are going up. The retail market has improved." But the recovery has done little to halt the city's decline. As in most of the country, the growth in the region is suburban, occurring in the outlying towns just beyond the Decatur line. The community's only sizable shopping mall, built a few years ago, is across the border, in Forsyth. And, as places like Forsyth have boomed, they have siphoned off much of Decatur's middle class. Left behind are the poor and the elderly (and, although white Decaturans might not say it out loud, the black underclass). Storefronts are boarded up. Lots stand empty. Houses have fallen into disrepair. In Decatur proper, says lifelong resident Jack Lamont, "it looks like the town has had cancer."

Nowhere has the decline hit harder than in Decatur's schools. For the past decade, as the population has grayed and many younger families have run for the burbs, student enrollment has been falling. (And, even as many middle-class blacks flee the city, the black student population continues to rise vis-à-vis the white.) As enrollment has declined, so has funding from the federal and state governments. To make matters worse, the area's major industries have begun a push to have their tax burdens reassessed, with devastating impact. When A.E. Staley reassessed, it cost the school sys-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tem a few hundred thousand dollars, says Jeffrey Perkins, whose term on the school board ended November 9. Twice in the past year, the city has presented residents with a referendum to fund desperately needed improvements to school infrastructure. Both failed—many residents just didn't have the money. "Somewhere between 60 and 65 percent of our students receive free lunches," says Perkins. "There are a lot of poor folks."

Facing budget deficits, the school board recently voted to close one of the area high schools and shuffle the students into the remaining two. The decision threatens to speed middle-class flight. Parents are angry at the specter of their children being crammed into larger classes in older facilities. (The closed school is one of the newer buildings and will now serve as a middle school; the old middle school, in turn, is being shut down.) It's safe to say that many of the parents who are able to will respond by shifting their kids either to the growing county schools or to one of Decatur's private academies.



AP/SETH PERLMAN

Perhaps most ominous of all has been the issue of violence. From the mid-'80s through the mid-'90s, gangs and drugs had the town—and the schools—by the throat, says Melverta Wilkins, who teaches in one of the system's alternative-education schools. "We did have tons of problems with gang activities," she says. "There were drive-bys. They were killing each other. It was quite dangerous for many of the children and even regular citizens." In recent years, prominent gang leaders have been prosecuted (or killed), and the violence has died down. But, for many in the area, Decatur schools still have the taint of gangbangers.

Long before the football riot, then, residents without the means to move their kids out of local schools felt they were under siege—a fact that was hardly lost on the school board. Faced with parents already angry about school closings and other problems, board members may have (subconsciously) seen an opportunity for a show of strength, of determination to keep the forces of chaos at bay. The board's attorney, Jeffrey Taylor, notes that the district's zero-tolerance policy on violence was strengthened and publicly trumpeted this summer in response to the Columbine massacre. But this is a town where the words "school violence" evoke images of gangs of black kids shooting at one another. Consciously or not, the board may have felt impelled to sacrifice these young men—some of whom already had a reputation as punks—in an effort to prevent more demographically desirable (i.e., wealthier) families from pulling their kids out of the district. A group of young black men accused of gang-like activity offered the perfect opportunity to make a statement.

That's certainly how it's interpreted by Decatur's African American community. Black Decaturans say serious racial tensions have always run beneath the surface; the white population simply prefers not to face the problem. The idea that Jesse Jackson has caused the city's racial strife is absurd, says Perkins, one of the two African Americans on the school board at the time of the expulsion vote. "Is it Reverend Jackson's fault that there's only been five black firefighters in 100 years in the fire department? Is it Reverend Jackson's fault [that] I don't think we have one African American loan officer at the banks? Is it Reverend Jackson's fault we only have five percent African American teachers when the projections say that, by the year 2006, African American kids will be a majority in our school district?" (The black student population is already estimated at 44 percent.) "There is a lot of stuff that needs to be done," he adds. "But people are comfortable with how things are. They don't really want to talk about it. And then when something like this happens, then it's 'Oh, now Decatur is being shed in a negative light by the national media.' Well, you know, this is everyday stuff. It's just that what you were doing in the dark has now been brought into the light."

"This is just another example of what goes on in Decatur. There is no respect for black people," says Tony Wilkins, Melverta Wilkins's husband and a member of the Committee of Concerned Citizens, an African American support group started in 1995. He points out that, of the 1,700 expulsions and suspensions last year, 1,100 were handed out to African Americans. Several residents brought up the case of a local white student who threatened to blow up his entire school and was expelled for only one year, not two. "Black kids aren't the ones going around plotting to put bombs in entire schools," fumes Tony Wilkins. "But they're stereotyping us as criminals."

Spend a little time in Decatur, and it's easy to see how an African American might feel less than welcome. Evelyn Hood, who opened the African-American Cultural and Genealogical Society on North Main Street, says she often has angry white folks yelling, banging on the center's window, and leaving nasty messages on her answering machine. (One caller, she says, likes to fill up the machine with country-and-western music.)

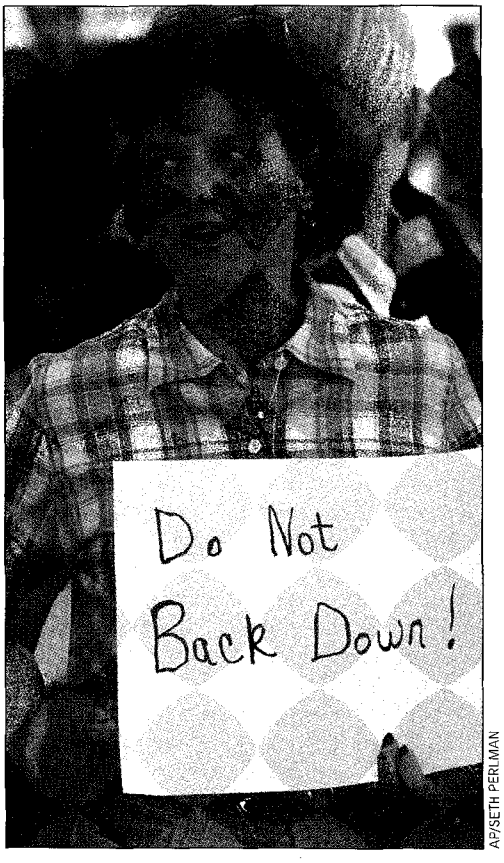
And many African Americans think the city doesn't do enough to combat Decatur's racist fringe elements. Not long ago, the local paper reported that, for a couple of years, a bookstore producing white supremacist materials had been operating in what is known as "the incubator," a city-subsidized office complex that provides new businesses a cheap place to operate until they get on their feet. When confronted, city officials admitted to knowing about the store's activities but claimed they had no legal authority to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

evict the proprietors. "That's not the point," says the school board's Perkins. "Nobody's saying, 'Run out there, put them out, and get sued.' But make the community aware of what they're doing. Come out publicly and say, 'We don't want you here. We don't appreciate your being here,' and maybe have some picketing or something."

This is not to say that Decatur is teeming with racists. The anti-racism signs at the city limits are part of a larger program, called "Not In Our Town," started by Carolyn Wagner, a local white woman. Based on a similar movement launched up the road in Bloomington, Illinois, Wagner formed a Decatur branch last year (around the time a student at the local university reported that racist epithets and threats had been scrawled on her door.) The group hosts seminars and workshops to encourage people to come together and discuss race-related problems and concerns.

Likewise, the person who arguably started this whole circus, the head of the area's new Rainbow/PUSH coalition, is white. Rick Tomlinson, an English professor at Richland Community College, opened the Decatur office in April with the original aim of addressing economic issues, such as Medicare rights and investment strategies for the working class. It was pure coincidence, says Tomlinson, that the first big issue to land in his lap had a racial component. The 15 residents who form the coalition's board were really looking at this "as a legitimate effort to empower people to have a greater voice in community affairs," he says. "In a way, I profoundly regret this as a way of trying to start that effort. But you can't just tell people, 'Well, it's tough. Go away and come back in a couple of years when we're more solidified.'"



AP/SETH PERLMAN

It's an even spookier coincidence that, as a boy growing up in Decatur, Tomlinson found himself in frequent fights and, for more than a year, dropped out of the very high school where the football melee took place. He was eventually "drug back" by a local parish priest and went on to attend Georgetown and Oxford Universities. "I feel strongly about second chances," Tomlinson says. He also feels strongly that barring students from education will only feed the problems society is trying to combat, and he is disturbed by what he perceives to be a nationwide trend toward school expulsions.

Tomlinson may have been genuinely surprised when Decatur's expulsions became racialized. But, for many African Americans in town, the expulsions offered an opportunity to do exactly what the local school board was hoping to do: make a statement. And that statement, it turns out, has a lot to do with the status of blacks in Decatur and not much to do with whether or not it makes sense for school officials to crack down on students who are terrorizing other students at a football game.

For too long, African Americans have just accepted their second-class status in Decatur, says Melverta Wilkins. They don't bother to vote and they don't fight for better representation in or better treatment from the city's power structure. "Maybe people gave up because they couldn't win anyway," she offers. "We've never had anybody to fight with us on any of the causes." Jackson and Rainbow/PUSH, she says, have given people new hope: "To even bring out all the African American community in this matter is the biggest progression I have seen in years."

The Sunday of the big march is cloudless and warm—a perfect day for protests. By noon, two dozen state police cars are lined up outside the Holiday Inn. By 1:30 p.m., surly city police officers are circulating among the assembling marchers with video cameras. But things stay low-key. A few thousand people—more than half of them bused in from Chicago—line up on Franklin Street to follow Jackson. There is a sprinkling of white faces in the crowd, including a handful of Communists from the Progressive Labor Party hoping to do a little recruiting by handing out neon orange stickers with slogans like "Death to the KKK." A few gawkers line the route. Then, in carefully arranged rows of five, the crowd begins its two-hour, two-mile march to MacArthur High School.

Over in Nelson Park, the scene is smaller—about 200 onlookers gather, the majority in apparent support of the Klan—and much more emotional. This is ground zero for the area's angry white men and women. One (white) anti-Klan demonstrator shows up and suffers what may well be the most vicious, profane verbal assault in the history of the English language. A couple of African American teenage girls zip in and out. (We just wanted to be nosy and take a photo, explains high school senior Felicia Moore.) A lone, impressively large black man stands in the middle of the crowd, smirking at all the screaming and fist-pumping. But nothing ruffles the feathers of the two dozen police standing guard. After the ten or so Klansmen say their piece, the rally disperses, although some locals ask to meet with the group before it heads home to Indiana.

Monday morning, on my way out of town, I drive back by the sites of both events. The streets and park are clean. There are no signs, no leaflets, no physical evidence that the town was ever disturbed. Some Decaturans pray that, in time, the same will hold true for the community itself. But for many others, white and black, that would be the ultimate defeat. The fight is a chance to change Decatur's future, and, although they would never admit it, that matters more than discipline at one school, or the educational prospects of seven young black men. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Romance and Reality

One of the great twentieth-century romantic heroes is the newsman. In American fiction and plays and films, the newsman, of the press or radio or television, has become one of our era's chief chivalric knights, a redoubtable champion of truth, unswerving in his devotion to the public weal. What's more, he becomes a paragon simply by his choice of jobs. If a young man—or a young woman—chooses to become a professional of news, he automatically steps on to an ethical plane higher than what would have been his lot if he had become a bond salesman or a grocer. Yes, sleazy newsmen pop up in fiction from time to time, but for the most part, if a person reports or edits news, or produces news programs, he is an idealist consecrated to verity. If he meets interference, he will go to the stake, or the unemployment office, rather than compromise.

Thus in fiction. And this rosy view is not entirely fictitious. Most of the newspeople I have met have been at least as ethical, as dedicated to truth and social good, as any doctor or lawyer I have known. But in fiction, the newsman glows brighter. With relative liberty of movement compared to those who are office-scheduled, with behind-the-scenes insight into seamy facts, he fights the monsters who threaten us. Let the world crumble around him: worn, wrinkled, coffee-sodden and sometimes drunk, he keeps his scutcheon unblotted and his lance free.

The latest instance of this romance is, paradoxically, based on fact. **The Insider** (Touchstone) treats the relatively recent brouhaha caused by the revelations—first suppressed, then broadcast—about cigarette manufacturers on the CBS program "60 Minutes." The screenplay, by Eric Roth and Michael Mann, derives, with adjustments, from a *Vanity Fair* article called "The Man Who Knew Too Much" by Marie Brenner. That man is Jeffrey Wigand, a scientist once employed by Brown & Williamson, the third largest tobacco company in this country. Wigand was discharged, and because he knew shocking data about the contents of cigarettes, he had to sign a guarantee of confidentiality in order to get his severance pay. His tribulations after TV people get in touch with him are a major part of the story; but the film's protagonist is Lowell Bergman, one of the "60 Minutes" producers. His struggle to get Wigand on the air, untrammeled, is the central agon of the film. The accompanying struggle of Bergman's on-camera colleague, Mike Wallace, is a counterpoint.

After much travail, Wigand agrees to the interview with Wallace, which is taped. Then the CBS lawyers step in. One of them says that, if the interview is broadcast and Brown & Williamson sue, B & W may end up owning CBS. In the long run, after much chivvying and many (verbal) fights, the matter is worked through to the broadcast of an altered version of the original. This broadcast obviously helped engender the freedom to make this film.

The Insider grips; and one aspect that grips especially is (as presented) the naïveté of these weathered professionals, Bergman and Wallace—especially the former. It's a naïveté that Bergman seems to guard zealously: a belief that news reporting can possibly be done without the slightest regard to any financial tugs that may arise. Bergman is an experienced man, yet he never clearly sees that the basic struggle is not between him, the truth-teller, and the dragons of deception, but between two corporations, each interested in its safety and profits. He never admits that "60 Minutes" is a hallowed program at CBS not only because of its intrinsic quality, but also because it ranks high in the ratings and makes a lot of money. Bergman must know all this, of course, but after his victory he leaves CBS because he feels disillusioned—that something in him has been "broken." Along the way, one of the characters quotes, without attribution, a line of A. J. Liebling's: "Freedom of the press is guaranteed to those who own one." Bergman doesn't hear, or chooses not to hear.

Anyway, the Bergman we see could not have been motivated solely by ideals. He is a professional in a job, trying to do well in that job, and the Wigand story would be a sizable feather in his cap. Professionally speaking, he stands to gain by it in prestige and, presumably, in salary. I don't remotely suggest that Bergman is merely pretending to care: his fight is honest and unquestionably worth fighting. It is his shocked attitude toward the struggle, as shown here, that seems touched by romance. (Throughout, as troubles harassed him, I kept asking myself, "What else did he expect?") As portrayed here, he is the archetypal newsman-hero of fiction, volcanic at his employers' worries about their liability, fiercely proprietary of his share of the TV medium that in fact belongs to somebody else. In short, he behaves in this film, which is presented as fact, as if he were being filmed.

The patterns of the scenes are a bit repetitious—encounters flaring into dramatic exits by one or another character. The prelude, a Mike Wallace interview of a Hezbollah leader in Lebanon, doesn't do much more than delay the start of the tobacco story. But that story has immediacy, and the dialogue of the screenplay is pungent. Mann, co-author of the screenplay, directed well. His best-known previous directing, *Heat* and *The Last of the Mohicans*, was adequate, but here he has a keener feeling for pace—and for wholeness. With the camera of Dante Spinotti, he aimed at a film that would transmute the hectic materials from splashy tabloid effect into a chiaroscuro of seriously troubled lives. (Spinotti is one of those rare cinematographers who know how to highlight with shadows.)

The cast is first-class. Russell Crowe as Wigand begins from the inside: he concentrates on the man, not the role; and whether or not this is the real Wigand, he builds his own Wigand, fully. Al Pacino, as Bergman, and Christopher Plummer, as Wallace, are marvelously matched by being mismatched. Pacino is the American realistic actor in excelsis, surprising us minute by minute with the lightning flashes and jagged fragments of encounter. On the other hand, Plummer, one of the best actors I have ever seen, most certainly in the classic vein, courses along smoothly next to Pacino, surprising us with a grace that comes from beautifully vitalized design. The two of them form a wonderful stylistic duet.

A last note. *The Insider* may set a record for the highest number of phones and phone calls in one film.

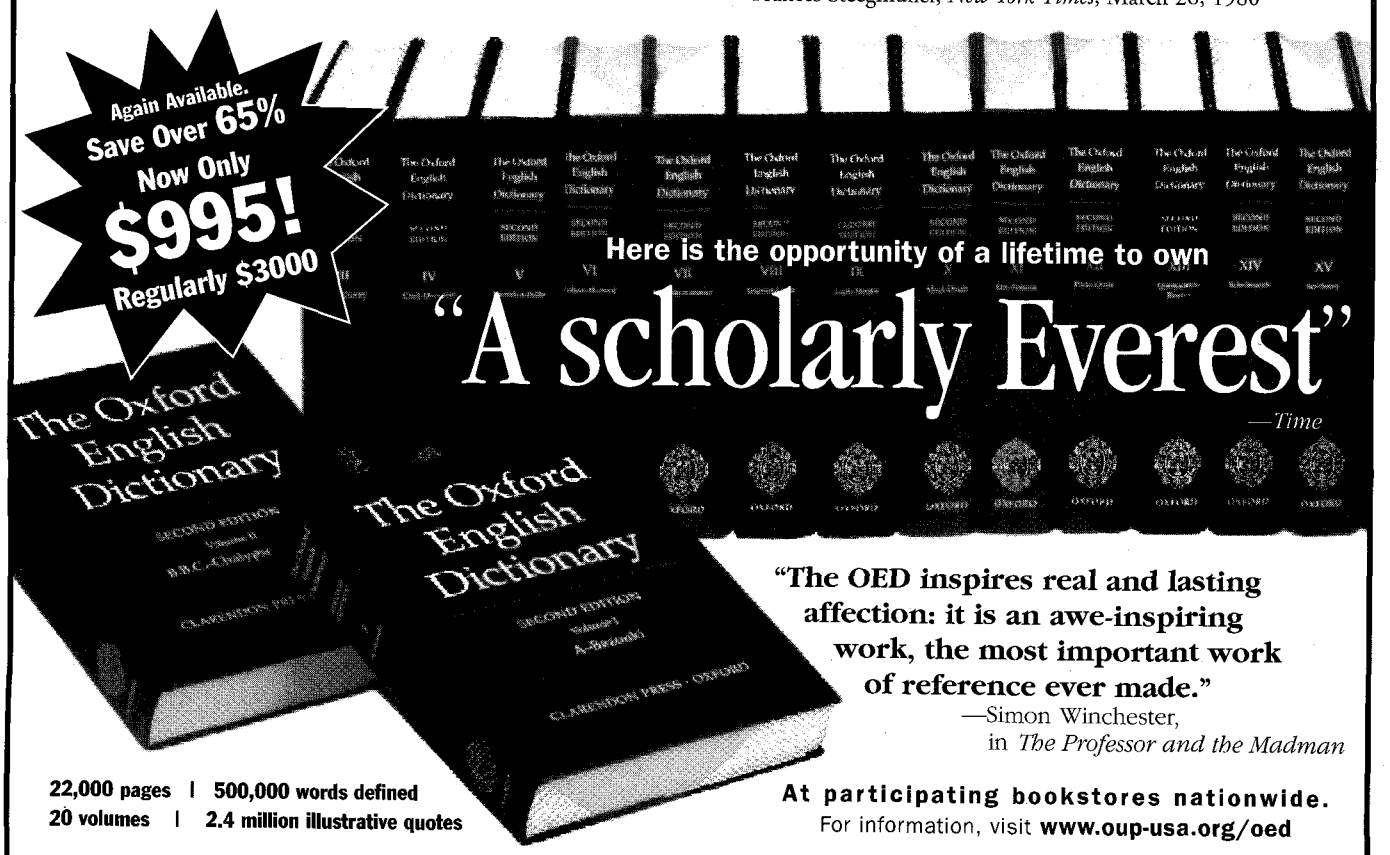
For thirty-five years, the English director Michael Apted has interwoven a special documentary project through his fiction-film career. In 1964 he helped to choose fourteen English children, aged seven, of differing sorts and classes who were interviewed at length for a TV documentary

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two Spectacular Gift Ideas for the Holidays

"I'm told that when Auden died, they found his OED all but clawed to pieces. That is the way a poet and his dictionary should come out."

—Frances Steegmuller, *New York Times*, March 26, 1980



Here is the opportunity of a lifetime to own

"A scholarly Everest"

—*Time*

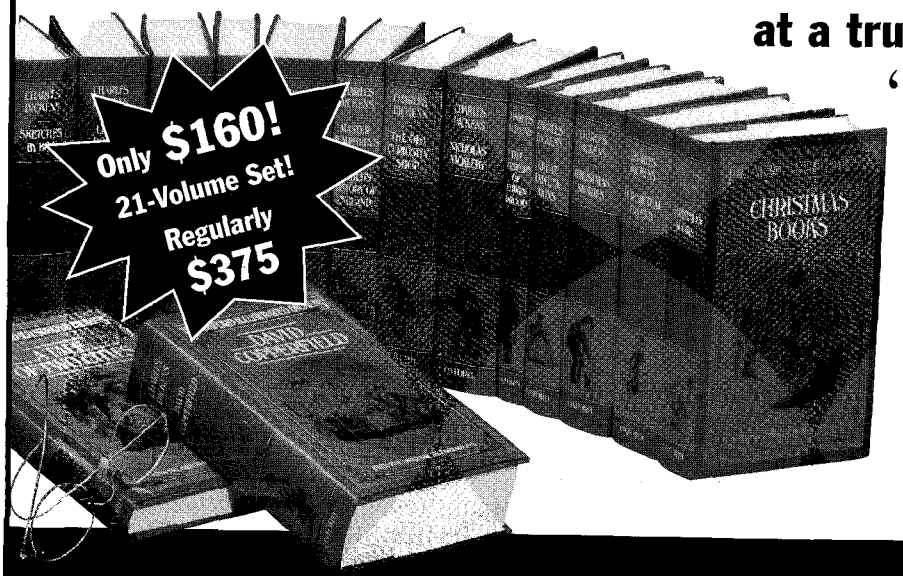
"The OED inspires real and lasting affection: it is an awe-inspiring work, the most important work of reference ever made."

—Simon Winchester, in *The Professor and the Madman*

22,000 pages | 500,000 words defined
20 volumes | 2.4 million illustrative quotes

At participating bookstores nationwide.
For information, visit **www.oup-usa.org/oed**

Here is a chance to own the complete works of Charles Dickens at a truly breathtaking price!



"Magnificent."

—*Newsweek*

"To own at one swoop virtually everything written by one of the most prolific geniuses of the 19th-century novel is a reader's fantasy."

—*The Washington Post Book World*

For more information on *The Oxford Illustrated Dickens*, as well as a very attractive offer on the twenty-nine-volume *Oxford Mark Twain*, visit our special website at

www.oup-usa.org/sets

Visit www.oup-usa.org • 1-800-451-7556 • Refer to Promo I 992

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

called *7 Up*. Apted then took over the project. Every seven years since then, he has interviewed those fourteen people again, and has made a another documentary about them. The latest such, with only eleven of the original people, is **42 Up** (First Run). And like all the previous ones, it has its American première at the Film Forum in New York.

We have all seen speeded-up films of plants growing: but people! Apted has plumbed one of the most fascinating uses of the motion-picture camera. His virtue's stern reward is that, as the series proceeds, he must do more and more skillful editing, in something like house-that-Jack-built style, to remind us of the past interviews with each person. But he handles it all deftly, empathetically, charmingly. Most of the eleven subjects of course turn out otherwise than what might have been expected. (Simple instance: a woman who, as a teenager, said she didn't want babies, now has three lively teenagers of her own whom she adores.)

It would be hard to find a simpler idea for a series of documentary features—or a more engrossing one. ■

Mindy Aloff on Dance
Sight Unseen

One of the most difficult things in the world is to tell a story through dance, an art that lacks both the past and future tenses, and that is incapable of rendering more than a handful of relationships without the support of program notes. And yet these limitations do not seem to have impeded anyone. In the past year alone, choreographers have attempted to make ballets out of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* and Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, among other unlikely literary subjects.

Still, no borrowed authority is going to change the course of twentieth-century Western theatrical dancing, whose landmark story ballets, regardless of their subject, depend for their emotional power on formal mastery of the stage picture, on the poignancy of tiny gestures, and on the shaping of the roles in such a way that the dancers can draw the audience into the fantasy, so that we seem to live it right along with them. In dancing, if you cannot enter the fantasy on some level, then the ballet has failed.

Even when the theatrical frame and situation are very particular and complex—as in, say, Frederick Ashton's "Enigma Variations," which shows a day in the domestic life of Edward Elgar (the *coup de théâtre* is the composer's receipt of a telegram!)—the actual danced passages are restricted to a few emotions and to legible actions. One need not have read a biography of Elgar to understand how Ashton's figuration of his world feels. The characters may wear the clothing of another age and comport themselves with the manners of the past, but there is nothing opaque about their identities. This is who they are; or rather, this is what they do.

When we are able to inhabit these characters, it is precisely because they lack interior lives. In the verbal theater, it is possible for a character to say one thing while clearly wanting to say, or suppressing, something else. In dancing, an entire art form of interior life made manifest, what cannot be shown to the public simply does not exist. Indeed, there is so much about the world and the human condition for which dancing as such cannot account that a hybrid theatrical form, called dance-theater, had to be developed in order to accommodate the needs of choreographers to engage the material.

It is rather stunning, then, to find choreographers working in nearly all genres returning, with various degrees of trepidation, to the themes of classical beauty and romantic love; to find them once again respecting the boundaries between dance and drama rather than trying to transgress them. Pina Bausch's "Danzón," a work of dance-theater that she recently brought to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, is concerned with passages of pure dancing for its own sake. Although it includes her customary images of sexual humiliation—Jan Minarik infantilized in a diaper, Jack Benny-like double takes during moments of sensual congress between partners—it also offers something very unusual for a Bausch work: a clear stage floor, on which individual dancers perform distinctive solos and on which, at one point, the entire cast, in ballroom clothes, runs and falls backward in a large, swiping gesture of movement sumptuously pursued for the pure, childlike joy of doing it. A barefoot solo for the dancer Cristiana Morganti, tightly knitted from small steps that evoke the actual ballroom dance called *danzón*, features a motion in which the foot is used like a paintbrush, curled and twined over on itself, and it is one of the most insinuating moments of pure dancing that I have ever seen in a Bausch production.

"Danzón," as a whole, is a curiously synthetic piece, a kind of mosaic of images and techniques from elsewhere in her repertory that are strung in a loose sequence. Its tone is reflective, rueful in places. Set beneath a large bridge construction on which are projected slides and films of forests and fish and other aspects of the natural world, the meetings and the partings of friends and lovers are sketchily introduced and wiped away, as if all the pleasure and the pain were coming to us through a sieve of retrospection. Bausch's own solo, a dance for arms performed on the spot for nearly its entirety, evidences a weariness and a vulnerability that one does not associate with her, and its repeated soft salutes to something high and far away have an alarming, valedictory quality.

In the same week, Meredith Monk, another leading figure in the realm of dance-theater, gave the premiere of her new minimalist spectacle, "Magic Frequencies: a science-fiction opera" at the Joyce Theater, and she, too, fastidiously observed the distinction between theatrical events and dancing for its own sake. Monk is a more self-consciously disciplined craftsman than Bausch. Every element that she places on stage serves either a symbolic function or a narrative function, and, unlike Bausch, she rarely repeats details of staging exactly—choosing, instead, to play with them in terms of scale (particularly delighting in their miniaturization) or of mood.

In her new work—where the death of a man in his bed, attended by his intimates, opens out tenderly to a daily urban world, which is reinvested with magic by the reorientation of the viewpoints from which we see it—there is a dance proper, too. Again, it takes place in a dance hall or a ballroom, and, as in Bausch's work, the couplings are tinged with anticipation of uncouplings, in a very Romantic way. Monk does not make beautiful movement sequences, but her sensitivity to gesture and timing is so keen that one remembers nearly everything that her dancers do. Monk herself also performs in this scene, and she also has a passage of valedictory gesture, like Bausch, in the form of a gentle salute to an impossible dream.

Is it a coincidence, then, that *Giselle* is enjoying a resurgence of interest? In the past two years, the United States has seen

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

productions toured by the Kirov Ballet and the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, both of them with astonishingly well-cultivated dancing. (Alicia Alonso's *Giselle* for Cuba, which relies on her memory of the Ballet Theatre production that she used to dance with Igor Youskevitch, may be the most complete and persuasive version of the ballet being danced in this hemisphere.) Helgi Tomasson has staged a lavish new production for the San Francisco Ballet, with formations for the Wilis in the second act of great distinction—full of faceted and sculptural invention.

At American Ballet Theatre's season last spring, I attended a matinee, with Vladimir Malakhov and Amanda McKerrow in the leading roles, which was so infused with dance and dramatic detail that my companion, who has been watching *Giselle* for over a half century, pronounced it the most loving performance of the ballet that she had ever witnessed. There were certainly things that I had never seen before in any *Giselle*, such as the moment when Albrecht, about to betray the village girl by acknowledging his aristocratic fiancée Bathilde, steals one last heartrending look at the innocent whose happiness he is about to cut down forever; and the dancing in the second act was rich with stylistic delicacy and poetic effects that arose directly from subtle dynamic changes in the articulation of the classical vocabulary. It felt as if Malakhov had been coached by Rudolph Nureyev and McKerrow by Gelsey Kirkland. The tragedy has rarely made a dancegoer quite so happy.

STILL, IF HAPPINESS, and all that goes with it—social equilibrium, personal composure, moderated joy—are what you seek in dance fantasies, Romanticism is hardly the place to search for it. Happiness on the dance stage is a classical matter, and it has been so scarce in works of the past twenty years that it practically has to be reinvented. At the Boston Ballet this fall, Christopher Wheeldon has made an effort to do that in a new staging of Stravinsky's *Firebird*, using the longest version of the score, from 1910. Its cinematic techniques—with instantaneous cuts from scene to scene—and its dungeon-like setting of Kastchei's kingdom of monsters align it more closely at times with *The Wizard of Oz* than with Fokine's, Balanchine's, or Taras's stagings. The Firebird herself belongs to the movies, too: androgynous and severely costumed in a scintillating unitard, she is more imperial than mystically transforming, and the classicism that she represents is not the cold beauty of an untouchable exoticism but simply cold. Wheeldon, instead, has invested his considerable gifts

THE
GREAT ARIZONA
ORPHAN ABDUCTION
LINDA GORDON

In 1904, New York nuns brought forty Irish orphans to a remote Arizona mining camp, to be placed with Catholic families. The Catholic families were Mexican, as was the majority of the population. Soon the town's Anglo-Americans, furious at this "interracial" transgression, formed a vigilante squad that kidnapped the children and nearly lynched the nuns and the local priest. The Catholic Church sued to get its wards back, but all the courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, ruled in favor of the vigilantes. In retelling this nearly forgotten piece of American history, Linda Gordon recreates and dissects the tangled intersection of family and racial values, in a gripping story that resonates with today's conflicts over the "best interests of the child."
35 halftones • $29.95 cloth

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
800 448 2242 • www.hup.harvard.edu

LIFE LESSONS

Reluctant Return
A Survivor's Journey to an Austrian Town
David W. Weiss
"... an astonishing and moving document ... will reward readers of all faiths." —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)
"A powerful and unusually eloquent memoir of a prominent Austrian Holocaust survivor invited back to face ... old ghosts and demons. ... An intelligent and profound memoir." —*Kirkus Reviews*
Jewish Literature and Culture
Published with the sponsorship of
J. William and Frances B. Julian
208 pp, 25 b&w photos
cloth $20.00

The End of Patience
Cautionary Notes on the Information Revolution
David Shenk
"With equal measures of plain old common sense and uniquely gifted insight, David Shenk is the ideal guide through today's head-on collision of culture and technology." —Dan Rather
"Shenk, author of the celebrated Data Smog, *articulates further uneasiness with the information age in this collection of provocative punditry ... witty, often savagely funny."* —*Publishers Weekly*
224 pp
cloth $19.95

at bookstores
INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS
Orders: 1-800-842-6796
Web: iupress.indiana.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at formal invention in the human princess and her attendants, who are set in motion with intricate Thracian configurations and the first use of multilevel groupings that I have seen on the ballet stage in many years.

The awkward problem for Wheeldon's *Firebird* is that the human characters are more interesting than the fantasy: the Firebird's presence seems more ceremonial than necessary. Even so, Wheeldon's concentric inventions for the human court, absorbing and lustrous, consistently pleasure the eye, and the pas de deux for Ivan and his princess, with its orbiting low lifts and rapturous geometry, bring to contemporary ballet an element of charm and steady optimism that no other choreographer of his generation seems able or willing to provide.

Wheeldon is still in his early twenties. He is having to learn some very large lessons about choreography and stage direction in a very intense limelight of public and critical scrutiny. This *Firebird* shows him to be a fast study and an independent intelligence, while also exposing his inclination—it informed also his earlier ballets in New York—to diffuse an audience's focus by shying away from clear priorities. A *Firebird* in which the most alluring figure is the princess weakens the story and blunts the impact of Stravinsky's score.

The Firebird is a *monstre sacré*; she mates with music, and although she represents a beneficent force in the universe, she has no direct issue. Wheeldon makes her into a kind of super-athlete, but she is more than that: she is ballet as theater itself. The choreographer has glimpsed the creature, though he has yet to prove that he can seize her. And the choreographer's struggle is itself a kind of romance. ■

Jed Perl on Art

The Alchemist

I.

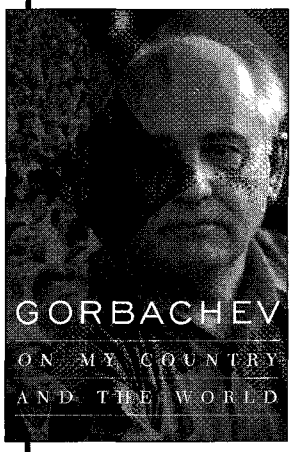
BALTHUS IS A go-for-broke dreamer and a ferociously self-critical craftsman. The combination is unbeatable. His nervewracked classicism can be incendiary or delicate; sometimes it is both at the same time. The portraits of adolescent girls who loll and stretch and spread their legs, many of which were already painted when Balthus was not much more than thirty, are the works that the public immediately associates with him. Nevertheless, subject matter is often the least of the risks that this artist, who is now ninety-one, is taking. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, for example, he was a great landscape painter in a lyric mode, using daring, crazy, too-pretty pastel colors. Balthus is a gambler, whether he is painting a young woman or a Parisian street or a Burgundian landscape.

Balthus wants to reclaim an Edenic vision of a painting as complete, as self-enclosed. His adolescents are not victims; they inhabit dream worlds of their own. Even when he paints a crowded table in the studio, he is turning it into another time, another place. This dreamy spirit is stamped—almost tatooed—into everything that Balthus has ever done. He embraces the unto-itself-ness of traditional painting with the vehemence of a man who is sounding an alarm. And that is not a traditional thing to do.

In a recent interview, this peerlessly independent artist explained that "I am not a modern painter"—meaning, I presume, that he is a member of no group. The more important point is that he has never cloistered himself from the gale-force winds of twentieth-century art. In Paris in the decades after World War I and well into the 1950s, Balthus linked up with Picasso, Artaud, Giacometti, and Camus. For many artists and writers the mysterious originality of Balthus's work was fascinatingly complicated by the figure that he cut in cafés and drawing rooms, where he was invariably described as one of the most beautiful men anybody had ever seen.

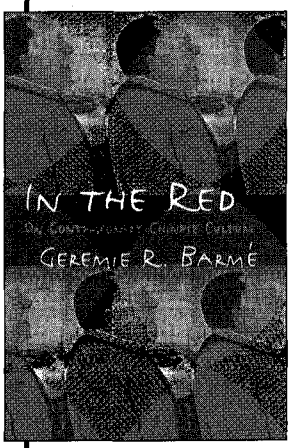
Balthus has had a genius for living at a striking angle to the fast-breaking news of modern art, whether it was Surrealism or a return to realism. In a photograph that Cecil Beaton took in Picasso's studio in the late 1940s, the older artist, who owned Balthus's *The Children*, gazes at Balthus, a tall, dashingly handsome enigma who in turn stares out at us. This photograph tells a lot about Balthus's stand-alone power. He is the essentially anti-modern modern. He piles paradoxes high, introducing subversive strains into a classical vision that is itself a subversion of contemporary ideals.

Behind the
headlines



One of the most important and intriguing figures of the twentieth century sheds light on Russia's 1917 revolution, 1991 breakup, and twenty-first century future.

$29.95



What happens when global culture and Chinese capitalist-socialism meet in the marketplace?

"Fearsomely well-informed, bracingly sardonic, and absolutely essential."

—J. Hoberman, author of *The Red Atlantis*

22 photos; cartoons • $30.00

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
columbia.edu/cu/cup 800-944-8648

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In his mad way, Balthus has always been an anti-establishment figure. His pastoral landscapes are as iconoclastic as his daydreaming girls. The journalists who nowadays visit him in the vast eighteenth-century Swiss chalet where he lives with his Japanese wife, Setsuko, cannot resist reporting that his preferred name, Count Balthazar Klossowski de Rola, is a pretentious fabrication; but even this reworking of his background—he had an exciting but sometimes hardscrabble bohemian childhood—belongs in a great modern tradition of outrageous self-invention.

Anyway, we would be foolish to put too much store in Balthus's costume-drama side. When Bruce Weber photographs him for *Vanity Fair* as an aging saint with a cross hanging around his neck, he is just hamming it up, like Picasso did for a long line of photographers. Balthus's little jokes do not make him any less of a tough-minded contrarian. Almost everybody who writes about his life in Italy in the 1960s and '70s, when he was director of the French Academy in Rome, describes him as having gone soft, as caring too much for pomp and circumstance. You might say instead that what Balthus was really doing was telling the art world that a painter could go his own way and still have some impact. This man, who on certain days could draw as beautifully as Ingres, was actually having an effect on arts policy at a time when Neo-Dadaism was king.

COURTESY SKIRA RIZZOLI

Balthus, "Getting Up," 1975–1978

In the early 1970s, certainly, Balthus's grandly subversive instincts were attracting a whole new generation. For art-besotted twenty-somethings who were suspicious of any establishment, whether at the Museum of Modern Art or at the Pentagon, Balthus was the man. If the spirit of the '60s had somehow led you to de Quincy and Blake and Laclos, Balthus could seem inevitable: we were arriving where he had started. And he is still with us. His radical traditionalism is a product of the very confusion that it seeks to refute. Out of that tension comes the light-and-dark, innocence-and-experience richness of his work. And slowly, in the years after we came to terms with the masterpieces of his youth and his middle age, new masterpieces have appeared: the two Japanese figures in the show at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York in 1977; *The Painter and His Model* (1980-81); *The Large Composition with Crow* (1983-86); *The Cat with Mirror III* (1989-94).

Balthus's paintings now sell for huge sums; he is the subject of major museum retrospectives; he has won a slew of international awards. A catalogue raisonné of his work is slated to appear this season; it includes some 2,100 works, including 350 paintings. Yet the hostility, the incomprehension, and the indifference with which his achievement can be met continues, if in constantly mutating forms. In 1938, at the time of his first show at the Pierre Matisse Gallery, the critic in the New York *Herald Tribune* complained of his "queer streak of fantasy," and said that the portraits were "unflattering" and "not very skillful nor very clever." Nearly half a century later, Robert Hughes, writing of the retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1984, was impressed by some of the portraits of the '30s, but found that in the later work "taste, decorum and an attitudinizing kind of augustness creep in." Hughes, who is generally a friend of representational painting, even complained that "what Balthus now produces, most of the time, is salon art." This fall, the Beadleston Gallery in New York City mounted a show of some three dozen works by Balthus, the first exhibition of any significance since that retrospective at the Met. Everytime I went to Beadleston there were artists there, taking a very close look; but *The New York Times* passed the event off with a few brief paragraphs.

II.

THE GENERALLY SCATTERED attention that Balthus receives from journalists and other writers is a source of frustration to his admirers. Yet this fall, as they dig into the enormous *Balthus: A Biography*, by Nicholas Fox Weber (Knopf), some people may find themselves wondering if benign neglect is not preferable to the small-mindedness, the wrong-headedness, and the startling vulgarity of this six-hundred-plus page tome. Weber obviously cares deeply about Balthus's paintings, but he has neither the sureness of touch nor the grasp of biographical and art historical technique that would enable him to present a coherent picture of the man and his achievement.

Weber cannot present a narrative straightforwardly. He is sloppy and inconsistent when it comes to using visual evidence to bolster his arguments. His grasp of art history is shaky, or worse. And he is desperate to write the kind of hypersexed psychobiography that might sell a lot of copies. Weber has turned up a few interesting facts, and there are perhaps fifty pages in this very long book that truly hold the reader. But the few good passages get lost in this interminable farrago of pet peeves, undigested sources, contradictory stories, overly fancy descriptions, trumped-up charges, attention-grabbing tricks, and bizarre irrelevances.

Weber, who is the director of the Josef Albers Foundation in Connecticut, published an excellent book a decade ago. *The Art of Babar* is surely the definitive study of Jean and Laurent de Brunhoff and the children's books that they produced. When he was reaching to describe the unbeatable charm of the Babar books, Weber found his level. When he attempts to tackle the infinitely larger talent of Balthus, he is in way over his head. Weber is swamped by the subject. He becomes petulant and posey and downright ugly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

WE WOULD LIKE YOUR HELP!

If there is a newsstand or bookstore in your neighborhood that does not sell THE NEW REPUBLIC and you think it should, please let us know. Either call us at (202)331-7494 ext. 3402 or send an e-mail message with the name and address of the newsstand or bookstore, along with your name to: Circulation@tnr.com

For Customer Service problems or inquiries please call our toll-free number 1-800-827-1289

In the early '90s, Weber spent a number of days with Balthus in his home in Rossinière in the Canton de Vaud. The book that he has written in the ensuing years is not a biography but an endless rehash of those afternoons and evenings that he passed sitting next to Balthus on the couch while the smoke from the artist's cigarettes swirled in the air. Scarcely a dozen pages ever go by without Weber dragging us back to that damn couch, where he moons over Balthus's seigneurial elegance or complains about the old man's fondness for a fib. Balthus, we are told near the beginning, is "like all successful liars"; and five hundred pages later Weber is wondering if he will once again be "submitting myself to the same old lies."

James Wolcott recently observed in these pages, in a review of Susan Faludi's book about American men, that "there are no impersonal odysseys anymore." That describes the problem with Weber's *Balthus* to a T. Weber has written a book that is less about Balthus than about getting ready to write about Balthus. Every time he goes to see a painting in a private collection, he reviews the interior decor. He tells us about "driving north on the interstate in my enormous rental car" to see a Balthus painting in Indianapolis. He litters the book with quotations from his favorite reading, which is heavy on such Midcult nuggets as Garson Kanin's *Remembering Mr. Maugham* ("Why do I forgive his behavior? Because he was a storyteller") and Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* ("What fascinates me about that memory is that it owes nothing to fact"). As for the people whom Weber interviews, they become characters in overwrought short stories, and after a while Weber hardly seems to care what his information-gathering has to do with Balthus, so long as he imagines that he is keeping his readers amused.

Weber is a mean-spirited voyeur. He is bug-eyed over the lifestyles of the rich and famous; he is eager to catch them out. For pages on end he romps in the sewer, and when he meets up with Claus von Bülow, the result is symbiotic bottom-feeding. Initially Weber set out to interview von Bülow in London because as a young man the Dane moved in the same fashionable Parisian circles as Balthus. Now, Claus von Bülow may deserve whatever he gets, but why Weber, having been invited into his home, felt that he needed to describe "a roll of bare stomach" that he saw "between the bottom of his small and tight bright red polo shirt and the top of his unbelted corduroys" I do not know, except that Weber seems to enjoy sticking it to the people who have made time to see him.

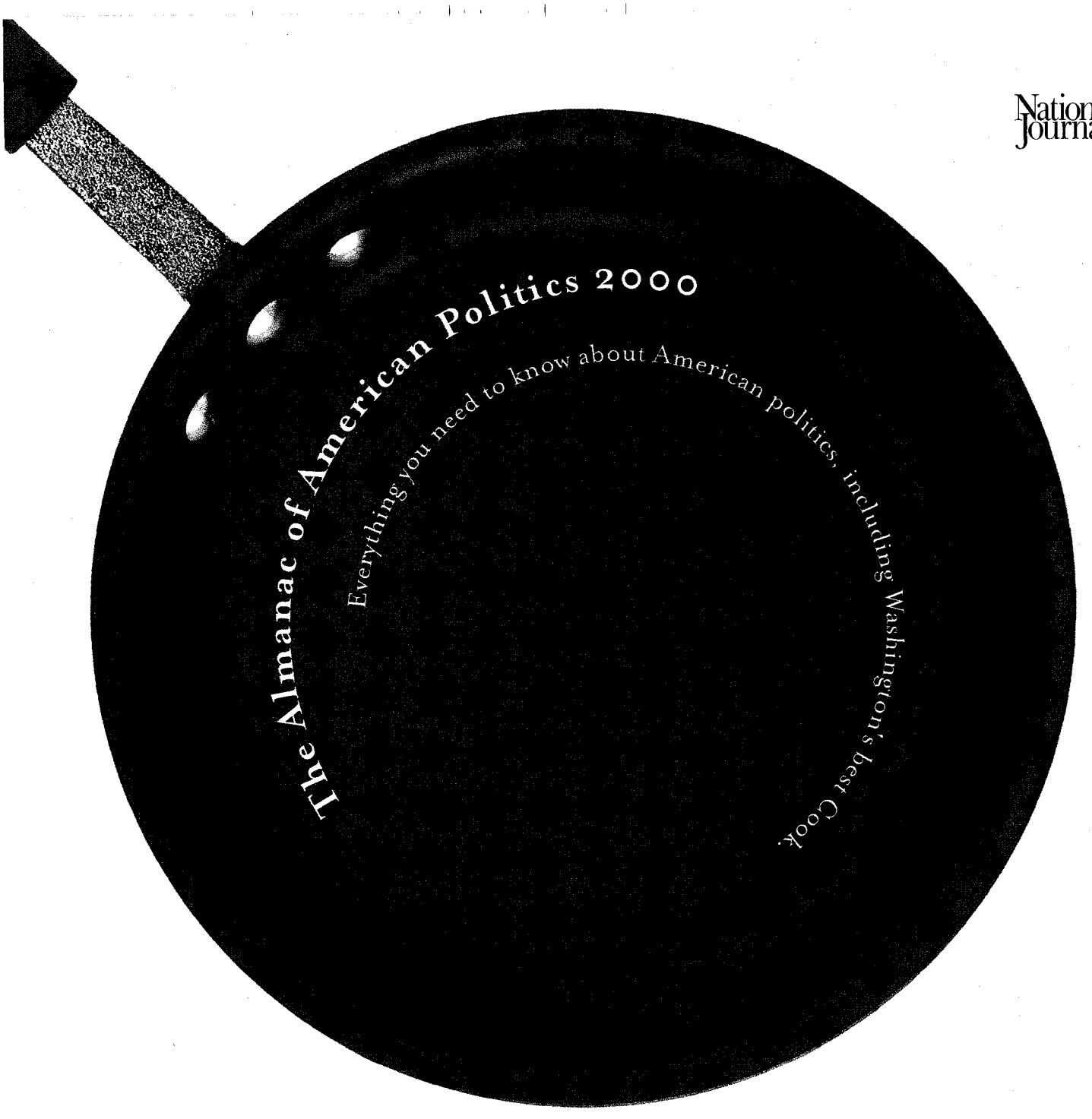
But Weber has not gone to see von Bülow only for the morsels of gossip that he can collect about Balthus and high society. His main interest, as Balthus's biographer, seems to be in von Bülow's criminal mentality. He explains that "because of Claus von Bülow's own history and reputation, I asked him what he thought Balthus had done to the subjects of those paintings who seem most clearly comatose or victimized. With this in mind, I showed him reproductions." (Weber never seems to go anywhere without what he treats as Balthus's filthy pictures.) And what, pray tell, was von Bülow's expert opinion? That the figure in *The Victim*, a painting from the 1930s of a reclining woman who is either asleep or dead, "had been raped." And then Weber quotes von Bülow: "Victim? I think that's perfectly all right by me. One finds women who are inviting, who have very strong personalities, but in bed want the roles reversed."

A BIOGRAPHER'S JOB IS to weigh the evidence and write the story. But not Weber. He is the squeaky clean American guy who is going to figure out those nasty Europeans and learn a thing or two about his own dark side while he is at it. He has little new information to provide about Balthus's extraordinary childhood, when his mother, Baladine Klossowska, was in love with Rilke, who became a mentor to Balthus and his brother Pierre. (Pierre Klossowski has a large reputation in France as an authority on the Marquis de Sade and the author of provocative erotic fictions.) But what Weber really wants to tell us about is the relationship that he imagines he is himself having with Balthus. He relates that when Balthus was "talking with me about this pivotal relationship of his youth"—the relationship with Rilke—Balthus "made me feel as if I had assumed the exclusive role of young confidant and spiritual kin—as if I might become the Balthus to his Rilke." This is the kind of fantasy that might flicker through anybody's mind; but if you haven't forgotten it a minute later, you ought at least to shut up about it. Later Weber observes that Balthus was "making me...feel that I was the chosen apostle, the pet selected to receive the truth he had been unwilling to reveal before." And some fifty pages after that Weber is patting himself on the back for not giving "in to his nearly irresistible promise of friendship."

By the end of the book, Weber is thinking that writing about Balthus has become a way of "addressing my own emotional complexity; grappling with my own unclear conception of mental health." Weber boasts of being "unequivocally seduced" by certain paintings. "The paintings reduced me to the very state that Balthus's adolescent models are in: overcome by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

National Journal


The Almanac of American Politics 2000
Everything you need to know about American politics, including Washington's best Cook.

There's too much at stake in American politics to trust short-order information. That's why National Journal's *The Almanac of American Politics 2000* comes complete with **Washington's best Cook—Charlie.** For 15 years, insiders who eat politics for breakfast, lunch and dinner have been devouring Charlie Cook's non-partisan analysis of every House, Senate and gubernatorial campaign in *The Cook Political Report*. Now Charlie's outlook on the 2000 elections garnishes Michael Barone's insight on every state and district in America—making *The Almanac of American Politics 2000* **the ultimate meal for political gastronomes.** For just $54.95, you don't get a plate of information, but a seven-course meal. To order your copy, call us toll free at **1-800-356-4838 or visit us at www.nationaljournal.com/almanac**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

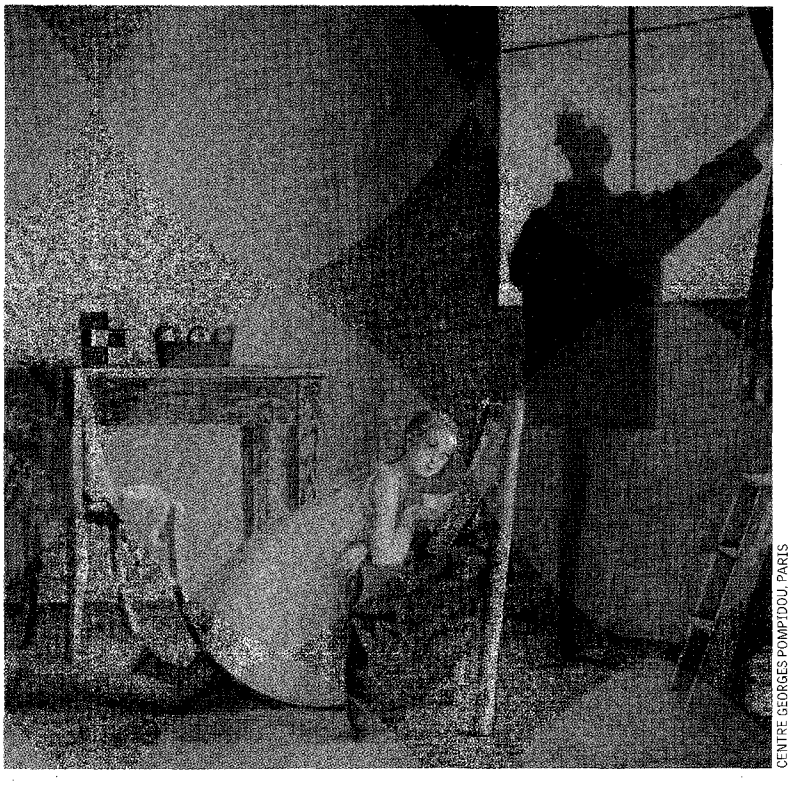
sensuous pleasure to the exclusion of all other thought." But then, in case his readers were worried that Weber was going girlish on us, he is glad to explain that he feels like quite a guy—a guy like Rilke, in fact. "When, a couple of years into the project, I hung up the phone after one of our rambling conversations, I realized that I had come to love the man. No wonder Rilke adored him so."

The biographer who doesn't know the difference between writing the book and going on the circuit to discuss the sweet agony of doing the homework is not in a very good position to distinguish between art and life, but then Weber doesn't want to know from distinctions. Weber enjoys twisting human behavior into evidence of artistic pathology, which is no doubt why he goes on at such length about Balthus's various efforts to disguise the true nature of his family background. For a number of years, it has been well-known that Balthus's mother was Jewish and that his maternal grandfather was a cantor. Balthus is determined to deny this. Weber, who is Jewish, says that he is offended by this denial; and for once I can see how he feels.

The truth of Balthus's background, and the possible reasons for his denial of his ancestry, are subjects with which a responsible biographer will someday have to deal. For Weber, however, the trouble that he has had in getting at the truth is the salient fact. As far as he is concerned, every time Balthus fabricates a fact we learn something about what is wrong with his painting. "Like all successful liars," Weber explains, "Balthus intersperses the falsities not just with truths but with a dose of obscure or confidential information that makes you feel like an insider with rare access to what others do not know." This strikes Weber as not unlike Balthus's method in the paintings, where he claims that Balthus will "in certain details" be "disarmingly faithful to the truth of appearance so as to be able to carry off a major feat of deception."

For Weber, Balthus's "denial of his Judaism was so crucial that, to support it, he had invented a construction as precisely premeditated, and elaborate, as the composition of his large canvases." While the surface of this book is prurient and smarmy, the underlying assumptions are grimly mechanistic. Once a biographer has made an analogy between deception in life and artifice in painting, he is free to interpret artistic devices as psychological necessities. And after a while everything becomes arbitrary. You can mix and match facts.

Weber expends enormous energy in nailing down the Jewish connection that Balthus prefers to deny, and in demolishing the claims to the Polish title that Balthus wants to maintain. He has a thing or two to add to what others have written about these matters; but even when he is fairly straightforward in admitting that what he is delivering are not exactly revelations, Weber does strain to make it appear that the ten or so days that he spent talking with Balthus conferred upon him some sort of privileged position. Nothing could be further from the truth. Back in the early '90s, when Weber had his audiences with Balthus, there was reason to believe that the artist still preferred to be "a painter of whom nothing is known," as he had described himself to John Russell when that critic wrote to him in 1967 for biographical information for a Tate Gallery catalogue. But in the time between Weber's pilgrimages to Balthus and the appearance of his book, it has become evident that Balthus has been cultivating a very different approach when it comes to speaking to historians and journalists. The recluse has become more talkative.



CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU, PARIS

Balthus, "The Painter and His Model," 1980–1981

There are a number of possible explanations for this shift in Balthus's attitude. Old men like to reminisce. And perhaps it is not a coincidence that Balthus's change of heart occured after the death in 1989 of his longtime dealer Pierre Matisse, and may reflect the artist's feeling that he now must confront the public on his own. Whatever the reasons, the joke is on Weber. It turns out that his moments of illumination with Balthus may have been just a few slots in the artist's busy confessional calendar. In the '90s, interviews and essays and books that present one or another version of Balthus's life have proliferated. (The catalogue of the retrospective at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lausanne in 1993 and Claude Roy's 1996 monograph are particularly interesting.)

Balthus is telling more and more tales, and surely there is a need to sift truth from half-truth and outright lie. At some point, though, the detective work must end and a life must be constructed. When I open a book about Balthus, I hope for an account of how the extraordinary artistic and literary environment in which he grew up affected his imagination. As the book progresses, I want to understand how his responses to people with whom he came in contact as an adult helped him to shape those earliest impressions. I want to see how the imaginative life of the times affected his imagination. There is a good deal more to be said about Balthus's life, but the writer who presents this material convincingly will have to turn our attention from Balthus's prevarications to the actual ins-and-outs of a story in which the bare facts surpass most fairy tales in grandeur and improbability.

III.

BALTHUS WAS BORN in Paris in 1908. His parents, Baladine and Erich Klossowski, were serious, progressive painters. His father was also a distinguished theatrical designer and an art critic. His study of Daumier, published in Germany in 1923, is widely regarded as spearheading a revaluation of the legendary caricaturist's importance as a painter.

When Balthus and his brother were still

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quite young, their parents began to go their separate ways, and Baladine's lover Rilke took an interest in the boys. Barely in his teens, Balthus did a cycle of ink drawings about the adventures of a cat named Mitsou for which Rilke found a publisher and wrote a text that is generally regarded as his first serious literary work in French. Rilke encouraged the youngster to turn a nickname—which is what "Balthus" was—into a singular artistic appellation. In 1924 Gide, a friend of Rilke's, looked after the boys when they came to Paris to study. Bonnard commented on Balthus's early work and approved of his going to the Louvre to copy Poussin.

The artists and the writers who left their mark on Balthus when he was young were all products of a fin-de-siècle atmosphere in which the mixture of naturalism and classicism that fueled Postimpressionism was thrillingly joined with the mystical strains of Symbolist literature. The atmosphere of those years was by turns gaudy, saturnine, and luminous, and in the achievements of Balthus's mentors you find all those elements. These artists were formed in the 1890s, but they did some of their best work in the 1910s and 1920s, and in Bonnard's case even later. They were synthesizers and distillers, and Balthus is still, to this day, going deeper into their ideas. Indeed, the sweet-and-sour lyricism of his work of recent decades brings him as close to an essentially fin-de-siècle spirit as he was, in another way, when he created the hard-edged imagery of his earlier years.

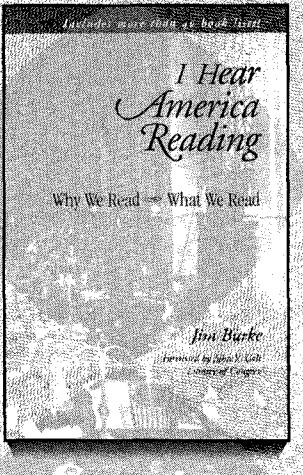
There may be no artist of the past century who has gotten so much that is so essential from family and friends. This helps to explain the inwardness, the concentration, of his art. Weber points out that everytime Balthus paints a window—as he does, over and over again—he must be harking back to *Les Fenêtres*, a volume of Rilke's poems illustrated with etchings by Baladine. But from what I have seen of Baladine's paintings, and especially of her watercolors, I suspect that many gestures and motifs in Balthus's work—his tilting heads, his comfortable sofas—are magnifications and adumbrations of images that originate with his mother.

Let us also not forget that Bonnard once mistook a painting of Baladine's for one of his own. This suggests that Balthus's fascination with Bonnard's themes, especially the nude in the bathroom, may have Baladinian resonances. And when Balthus, in the 1930s, forged a close friendship with Antonin Artaud, he did a famous pen-and-ink drawing of the author composed of short, discrete lines that is startlingly reminiscent of a little known drawing of Rilke by Baladine that appears as the frontispiece to Maurice Betz's *Petite Stèle pour Rainer Maria Rilke*, a volume that was published in 1927.

When Balthus objects to the critics and the historians who are concerned to nail down every influence, this may reflect his own lifelong inclination to take influences in stride. Balthus must know that in his own work he has given fresh and audacious accents to a meticulous Cézannesque approach that he saw in his father's work. Father and son devoted a good deal of time to stage design (a side of Balthus's achievement to which Weber devotes too little space). The illustrations in Erich Klossowski's book on Daumier include images of children and various odd figures that must have influenced Balthus. There may also be foreshadowings of Balthus's Parisian streets in Erich's portrait of Daumier's Paris. I do not doubt that Rilke's *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* is central to any understanding of Balthus's *Passage du Commerce Saint-André* (1952-54). Balthus's Cézannism in the 1950s brings us back to Rilke's great writings on the artist. As for Rilke's interest in Rodin, about whom he wrote a study, when Balthus was asked to draw a portrait of Balzac for a set of the author's writings published by Skira and including portraits by Derain, Picasso and others, Balthus chose to do a drawing that clearly derives from Rodin's various sculpted studies of Balzac.

The riches that his parents and their extraordinary circle gave to Balthus could

America *is* reading—
and the proof is in writing.



This book, Jim Burke's *I Hear America Reading*, gives me hope.
—John Y. Cole
The Library of Congress

I Hear America Reading
Why We Read • What We Read
Jim Burke
Foreword by **John Y. Cole**

"In an era of decreasing commitment to literacy . . . it is no surprise that most students, too, are bypassing books." So wrote English teacher Jim Burke in a seminal letter to the *San Francisco Chronicle*—seminal because of the astounding response that ensued when he invited readers to "write to my high school students about your experiences with books, perhaps telling them what role books and literature have played in your life." More than one thousand pages of letters came pouring in. The best are collected in this funny, poignant, and inspiring book.

You'll read stories from librarians and celebrities, nuns and felons, cattle ranchers and artists, second graders and septuagenarians. Through their experiences, we become enveloped in a rich tapestry of life. And isn't that the miracle of reading itself, its ability to inspire us across the full spectrum of humanity?

0-325-00134-0 / 1999 / 128pp / Paper / $12.50

To order your copy, call 800-793-2154, fax 800-847-0938, or write: Heinemann, 88 Post Road West, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881

Heinemann

Save 10% when you order online:
www.heinemann.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have easily overwhelmed or immobilized a young artist. What is miraculous about this great painter is that, even as he has gone back, again and again, to those youthful sources, he has also, since coming of age in Paris in the late 1920s and 1930s, moved forward, shaping with every step a complex relationship to the art of his contemporaries. Of all the things that Weber gets wrong, the most startling is his total mischaracterization of the artistic mood of Paris in the 1920s.

Weber argues that in 1926, when Balthus decided to go to Italy to study Piero della Francesca, this interest "was counter to the prevailing trends [because] at that moment in the history of art, the tendency was to avoid the past altogether." A little later he argues that it was unusual amid "the havoc of the 1920s....to gravitate toward order and discipline." I really have to wonder what Weber was thinking, considering that in the past he has written about a number of figures, such as Lincoln Kirstein, James Thrall Soby, and Leland Bell, who were very interested in this period. The decade or so leading up to 1926 was a time when Picasso, Matisse, Derain, Braque, Léger, and Gris were absolutely immersed in neoclassical ideas. Does he not realize that when Bonnard approved of Balthus's going to the Louvre and copying Poussin, he was reflecting a renewed interest in the Louvre among the avant-garde after the war?

Those were the years when Eliot wrote of tradition, Cocteau of a return to order, and Gide of classicism. To Weber's remark that Piero was in 1926 "among the old masters out of favor," I would reply that it was in 1927 that Roberto Longhi published a monograph on Piero which Kenneth Clark still regarded as the standard work a quarter of a century later. As for interest in the Renaissance among artists, in 1925 the Metaphysical painter Carlo Carrà published his book on Giotto, which opened with the observation that the work of Giotto "has a special interest for us today."

In 1926, the year of Balthus's trip to Italy, the Roman publisher Valori Plastici brought out a little monograph by De Chirico, a painter whom Balthus apparently admires, about Courbet, the artist of the past who would soon mean the most to Balthus. If there is any question that Balthus was in sync with the interests of somewhat older avant-garde artists, it will be dispelled by De Chirico's startlingly apt observation, on the first page of that book, that "sometimes we think of Courbet and his works as we think of the youth of our parents." That remark explains precisely how Courbet worked to enlarge Balthus's sense of what Baladine and Erich and his surrogate parent Rilke had taught him.

In the 1920s the backward glance was, in certain circles, an avant-garde innovation. This idea would be of inestimable importance to Balthus, who had to find a way to move forward even as he honored his obsession with the idols of his youth. The essential risk that Balthus has taken as an artist is not the risk of controversial subject matter, and it has nothing to do with self-analysis or self-exposure. He has dared, at a time when art is more and more seen as unmediated self-expression, to believe that a painting is a free-standing universe which the artist constructs conscientiously, piece by piece, until it achieves a poetry that transports us out of ourselves. The risks involved in this kind of elusive poetic vision were abundantly evident in the 1920s and 1930s, as the Neoromantics (they included Pavel Tchelitchew and Eugene Berman) were reaching for a grand generalizing spirit but ending up in parochialism and kitsch. Balthus's achievement is to have brought to the radical traditionalism of those years a hardness, a clearness, a belief in form as having a logic of its own that goes back to Picasso, Braque, and Bonnard.

Balthus constructs his dreams, line by line, stroke by stroke. In Balthus, as in no other artist of this century, we witness the attempt, every time he begins a painting, to construct a complete illusion, an entire reality. He does not always succeed. How could he? But when writers, Weber included, accuse Balthus of not being himself because he has done so many different things, of hiding behind a new kind of softness, a new kind of color, a new kind of stylization, they are indicting him for the very disinterested power of invention that makes him great.

In a recent interview, Balthus observed that "painting is a show. Some paintings may be more spectacular than others, but every canvas is a performance." Painting is an artifice that becomes its own kind of truth. This is the case with the dark-toned, hard-edged realism in the portraits of young women in the '30s, and with the encrusted, beauty-of-decrepitude surfaces in the nudes of the '80s. And Balthus's women are only a part of his achievement. He has painted dozens of still lifes and landscapes, and many portraits of men. Among the fine drawings in the Beadleston show, there were examples of both the delicate Cézannesque drawings with slight color additions from the '50s and the astounding volumetric nudes of the '80s, with their reminiscences of Picasso's figures of the '20s.

Weber tends to write about Balthus's paintings as if each of them were an isolated achievement. But this artist's development has been remarkably organic, with motifs evolving through small studies, disappearing for years and then resurfacing in new guises. Weber does not even begin to deal with Balthus's reconsiderations of Asian art. His paintings of his wife Setsuko from the 1970s are the most important European response to Japan since Van Gogh. For those of us who have followed Balthus closely, one of the enormous thrills of recent decades has been the appearance, in 1986, in the midst of what seemed the patinaed serenity of his later years, of the horrifying absurdist drama of the *Large Composition with Crow*, with its deracinated female figure and its miniaturized self-portrait of the nude artist, who carries an immense cage. This painting, with its there-but-not-quite-there power, has the flashing strangeness of a dream; it is one of the greatest nightmare visions in all of European art. I was fascinated to read Balthus's observation, quoted by Weber, about this painting. "'I tried to invent a body which was not a nude: an abstraction of a nude.'" That is exactly what he did. Nothing is more disquieting than this image of a figure withheld.

There are dozens of pages in Weber's book where he praises the subtlety of Balthus's compositions and his brilliance as a handler of paint. Weber balks, however, when it comes to accepting Balthus's essential idea, which is that a painting is a parallel universe with its own glorious logic. He wishes to find the keys to the work in the life, yet his notion of a symbiotic relationship between art and life is just a sophomoric spin on Oscar Wilde, whose statement that "I treated art as the supreme reality and life as a mere mode of fiction" is quoted at the outset of the book.

Wilde himself would have understood that the reality that Balthus seeks in a painting of an adolescent girl or a Parisian street at dusk derives from an idea of art as magical mirror that is grounded in the achievements of the Renaissance. Balthus and Wilde would probably agree that an old idea of the mysterious self-sufficiency of religious art must be reclaimed for a new kind of art that will be able to stand apart from the philistinism of modern taste. For Weber, however, Wilde's comment is less about creating a firescreen between art and life than about fusing the two.

IV.

In his ludicrous attempts to keep up with the allegedly Wildean Balthus, Weber operates less like a biographer or an art historian than like a garbage collector. He gains access to the New York apartment of Stavros Niarchos, and he is so excited by what he sees that he can hardly concentrate on *The Guitar*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

ArtScenes

Salander O'Reilly Galleries 20 East 79th St., NYC. 212-879-6606. 12/8/99–1/8/00: **Bronze Reliefs:** An exhibition in association with Michael Hall, FA. Over 100 European & American bronze reliefs from the 15th & 19th Centuries. Works by: Ghiberti, Cushman, Dupre, G. Della Robbia, Clodion, Coysevox, & Charpentier.

Taranto Gallery 245 W. 19th St., NYC 10011, 212-691-9040. **Bar-Mitzvah**, group show, 12/16–1/08, reception Thu. 12/16, 7–9 pm. **Corpi a Tempo** by Nino Annaloro, 1/13–2/12, reception Thu. 1/13, 7–9 pm. **Impure Photography** group show 2/17–3/18, reception Thu. 2/17, 7–9 pm. Hours: Mon–Fri 9–7, Sat 11-5.

Swann Galleries 104 E 25th St, NYC 10010, Tel: 212-254-4710. www.swanngalleries.com **Auctions: 12/2 & 12/3:** Printed & Manuscript Americana. **12/9:** Photographic Literature & Photographs. **12/10:** Cameras & Viewing Devices. **12/16:** Maps & Atlases, Decorative Graphics. Newsletter on request.

First Street Gallery 560 Broadway, NYC 10012, Tel: 212-226-9127, Fax: 212-226-2057. **"FOOD!"** A group exhibition of work by gallery artists. November 30th–December 30th.

Leica Gallery 670 B'way, Ste. 500, NYC, 212-777-3051: T–F 11–6, Sat. 12–6. 12/10–1/15: Main Gallery: **Peter Miller & Catherine Leuthold: Paris.** Oskar Barnack Room: **Holiday Selections.** All photographs and the photographers' newly-published books will be available. Reception 12/9, 5–8pm. Book signing 12/11, 1–4pm.

Robert Klein Gallery 38 Newbury St.., Boston, MA 02116, 617-267-7997. E-mail: rlklein@tiac.net, Web: www.robertkleingallery.com. Twenty years experience, an extensive collection and broad expertise in 19th and 20th century classic and contemporary photographs.

Brooke Alexander 59 Wooster St., 2nd Fl., NYC, Tel: 212-925-4338. **Barnett Newman:** "The Complete Editions" **Jasper Johns:** "References to Barnett Newman" This exhibition will present the prints of Barnett Newman in their entirety. We will show works of Jasper Johns which refer to Barnett Newman.

ATELIER A/E 323 West 22nd Street, NYC 10011, btwn 8th & 9th, Tel: 212-620-8103. Now showing unrePRESSED: Wild, whimsical wood sculptures that are also functioning presses and prints created on them.

Howard Greenberg Gallery 120 Wooster Street, NYC 10012, Tel: 212-334-0010 Fax: 212-941-7479. **Exhibiting "Bill Owens: Suburban Folk Tales"** thru Dec. 4th, **"Ruth Orkin: Above and Beyond"** Dec. 10th – Jan. 22nd 2000 (Catalogue available). Gallery hours Tuesday – Saturday, 11am–6pm..

Space 12 Gallery 12 Union Park Street, South End, Boston, MA 02118, Phone: 617-423-9760, Email: space_12@ix.netcom.com. Contemporary Fine art, specializing in paintings and sculpture. 12/1–12/31: **Harry Folsom: Small Works**: with a preview of his new larger works.

O.K. Harris Works of Art 383 West Broadway, NYC, 212-431-3600, Fax: 212-925-4797, www.okharris.com. 12/4/99-1/8/2000: **Naoki Iwakawa,** constructions; **Pavel Opocensky**, sculpture; **David Miretsky**, paintings; **Dennis O'Kain**, photographs; **Roberto Menchiari**, constructions; **Ethel Poindexter**, sculpture.

For Art Scenes Space Reservations, contact Shannel Myers, 212/924-8700.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lesson, Balthus's shocker of 1934, in which a female music instructor gets physical with the girl whom she is supposed to be teaching how to play the guitar. Weber cannot resist telling us that in Niarchos's bedroom he saw "on the delicate marquetry table ... in plain view, a king-size container of Preparation H. It was almost as large as the delicate base of the porcelain lamp next to it." Next Weber is wondering what kind of pornography "starring skilled sybarites" the owner of the apartment must play on the "VCR on a scale generally found in bars packed with sports fans." A few paragraphs later Weber is feeling that there is "something nice about this feeling of being an insider, and I relished my complicity." Complicity with whom? And in what?

You might think that a visit to *The Guitar Lesson*, the ultimate high-art voyeurism machine that Balthus may by now regret ever having painted, did not need trash-voyeuristic frills. But once you have seen what Weber does with this picture you can hardly be surprised at what happens when a painting fails to supply the necessary NC-17 titillation. For a number of years in the 1950s and 1960s, Balthus worked on a series of imposing paintings, *The Three Sisters*, that depict the daughters of the art dealer Pierre Colle, who had died young and in whose family Balthus was a valued friend. In these paintings, which are a monumental reflection on sibling feeling, the erotic charge is only a delicate undercurrent; but for Weber that is not enough. Interviewing Marie-Pierre Colle, the oldest of the sisters, Weber records that during the interview this attractive woman in her fifties "began, with her right hand, to massage her left breast: the one nearer to me. She was wearing a loose-fitting, silky blouse that was unbuttoned to mid-chest, and she had reached through the opening and under her bra." He seems to think that Marie-Pierre is coming onto him. He seems to think that he is getting into the Balthus role.

Weber overwrites and overinterprets. He also gets little things wrong: Lucian Freud appears as "Lucien Freud"; the Nazi sculptor Arno Breker becomes "Arno Becher"; a sort of Chippendale chair is said to be Empire; *The Turkish Room* is reproduced backwards. Weber blathers on about matters that are irrelevant or hideously indiscreet. As a writer, he is completely out of control. And like many people who lack self-discipline, he sees everybody else as a strict disciplinarian. It is no wonder that a writer who cannot shape a paragraph, let alone a book, regards Balthus's sense of structure and ferociously powerful feeling for form as a pathological need to control others. "The painted canvas," Weber explains, "was [Balthus's] means for dominating certain women ... and paralyzing them." Of Balthus's portrait of the Vicomtesse de Noailles, a great high-bohemian hostess whose keen intelligence is immortalized in this severe portrait, Weber writes that "Balthus established his mastery over her." Perhaps Weber often seems most comfortable with Balthus's landscapes because he doesn't object to people taking control of trees.

For pages on end, Weber presents one or another person's testimony to the fact that it was difficult to hold a pose while Balthus worked to get a likeness. And time and time again, instead of accepting the plain fact that sitting for an artist who wants you to hold still may not always be fun even if the painter is a handsome and glamorous guy, Weber suggests that Balthus was making people sit at the very edge of a table or keep their feet in ungainly positions to make himself feel good. Weber ought to know that posing for a serious artist is no picnic. Yet when he meets Dolores Miró, the daughter of the artist and the subject of one of Balthus's greatest double portraits, he cannot resist, after a cheap aside about her "supple leather clutch ... full of makeup," quoting her comments about her father's lack of concern that she was unhappy posing. "Parents," she explains, "were very severe back then. You did what your parents wanted you to do." Which meant, Weber explains, that "after school, although she was tired and unhappy, day after day she sat for Balthus with her feet braced."

By the end of the book, you are ready for Weber to announce that he is filing charges against Balthus for half a century of child abuse. When Weber is trying to interpret *The Victim*, he decides to have a chat with Linda Fairstein, chief of the Manhattan District Attorney's Sex Crimes Unit. The book keeps taking you into nuttier realms of the everybody's-an-art-critic business. Weber goes to Fairstein, in the spirit of a social worker, for "an accurate diagnosis of the woman's situation. My hope was that this astute criminologist would tell me what Balthus would not. Was the 'victim' dead or merely comatose?" And after *The Victim*, Fairstein reappears periodically, giving the lowdown on what this awful man has done in his paintings.

Once Weber has treated Balthus as a sadist, a child abuser, a rapist, and even a murderer, it is no wonder that he interprets the major part of Balthus's career, during which he has moved away from the explicit subject matter of his work of the '30s, as a cover-up. The artist is pilloried as a fugitive—a fugitive from his own early style. Weber believes that it was only in his twenties, when he was painting youngish women in provocative poses in a sharp realist style, that Balthus "showed his real colors. He would continue to paint for over half a century to come, but here was the real person and artist he would subsequently cloak under so many layers." This is Weber's central theme.

Totally in charge, tackling the most provocative subject he would ever

Hamlet's Problems

To die, to fall asleep—
perhaps that's all there is to it.

—*Hamlet*, parallel text edition
(Perfection Form Company, 1983)

No one takes him seriously when he speaks
like that, whining and moping around the castle,
getting off the occasional cruel remark,
upsetting his friends, making his mother cry—
another strung-out student who can't manage
to finish what he started. Even the ghost
has to return to point this out.
So he kills his girlfriend's father,
but does he tell her that he's sorry?
Plays hide-and-seek with the old man's body,
pretends he's crazy, pretends he's sane,
in it alone to the end. As if everything
had turned into a joke only he understands.
Even death. Especially death.
How impoverished action looks by itself—
some hopeless kid locked in his room
with his father's revolver. That's all
there is to it, he thinks. So fuck it.
At a loss to say what it might be.
Or any of the words that could make it matter.

Lawrence Raab

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

attempt, Balthus did some of his best paintings. The artist might occasionally hit his stride again, but here—frankly engaged by violence and the depiction of dominance—he was at a peak. Later in life, cloaked beneath layers of facade, Balthus would not be the same. . . . Visually and psychologically, his work would become too labored.

Not that Weber is without compassion for the painter-perv. Poor Balthus, he explains, "never had the serenity necessary for the successful completion of his own adolescence."

V.

Is it any wonder that an artist who for more than half a century has had to listen to ever more bizarre misinterpretations of his work should turn aside attempts to explicate his paintings? Balthus has brought his canvases to a point where they seem right to him, and that is that. He has let them out in the world, and there is nothing more that he can do about it. One of the most interesting statements that Weber quotes—and then ignores—is Balthus's observation that "if you make a portrait and you are trying to find the style of a person, the psychology comes in by itself." This is a marvelous description of the freedom of a work of art.

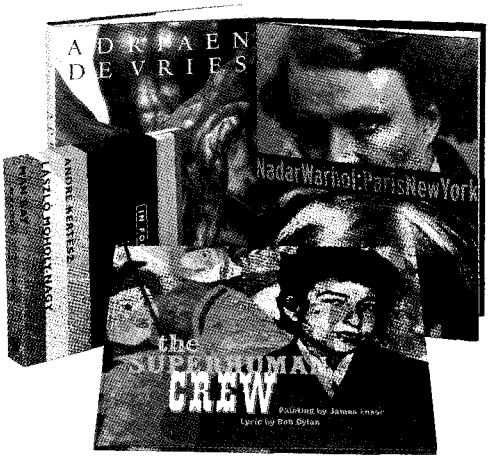
When Balthus talks about painting, he emphasizes its absolute physicality. "I do not paint to interpret or trasmit messages; I simply paint," he remarked in 1983. To the novelist Claude Roy, he says that "painting begins with the choice of the pigments, the support—linen, cotton or jute canvas, or paper, or cardboard, or wood—and of the brushes, with the manner in which the canvas or support is prepared and with the knack of the hand that lays the paint on the canvas. It is first and foremost an artisan's work." I suspect that Weber, like many Balthus watchers, interprets such comments as ironic, as a way for the artist to dodge responsibility for his incendiary subjects. But I do not believe that Balthus is obfuscating. He is suggesting, instead, that the people who have their eyes trained on the girl's crotch are missing a lot of other things that are staring them in the face.

The trouble that we have with Balthus is that he is at once a realist, a formalist, and a mystic, and he seems to see no conflict. The surprising result of this confluence of forces, at least as it was described by Balthus's son Stanislas in a brief text undoubtedly composed with the artist's approval, is that these adolescent girls become "untouchable archetypes of purity belonging to a higher realm." This kind of religiose writing is guaranteed to annoy know-it-all art watchers—yet what is the harm in suspending judgment for a moment and going where the artist is pointing us?

In 1973, Stanislas Klossowski de Rola published a volume called *Alchemy: The Secret Art*, a brief essay accompanied by illustrations from old manuscripts. I believe that this document holds a key to the understanding of his father's art. (Weber misses it, naturally; he is too busy telling us what an international playboy Stash is.) "Only through reliance on inspired intuition," the son writes, "the golden thread of Ariadne, will the puzzle fall into place and light replace darkness." The goal is to reach the Absolute, but this can only be achieved "if consciousness is radically altered and transmuted from the ordinary (lead-like) level of everyday perception to a subtle (gold-like) level of perception, so that every object is perceived in its perfect archetypal form, which is contained within the Absolute." Eroticism also plays a part—a metaphorical part, at least—in these magical transformations; Stanislas reproduces a late fourteenth-century manuscript of an androgyne, a symbol of the conjunction of opposites, that looks rather like the entangled figures in some drawings of two nudes that

Artful Gifts

New Books from the Getty



Adriaen de Vries 1556–1626
Imperial Sculptor
Frits Scholten
"Undoubtedly the best account of the sculptor in the language—one could argue, the best in any language."
—*The New York Review of Books*
$60.00

The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity
Aby Warburg
Introduction by Kurt W. Forster
Translation by David Britt
"[Warburg's] voice can be heard anew with the clarity, the purpose, and the authority of its original expression."
—*The New Republic*
The first translation into English of the collected writings of Aby Warburg (1866–1929).
$75.00

The Superhuman Crew
Painting by James Ensor
Lyric by Bob Dylan
Two works of art—James Ensor's masterpiece *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889* and Bob Dylan's "Desolation Row"—in one remarkable volume.
$24.95, includes CD

In Focus Boxed Set: André Kertész, László Moholy-Nagy, and Man Ray
Photographs from the J. Paul Getty Museum
Brings together three seminal volumes from the Getty's popular In Focus series.
$45.00 boxed set

Nadar/Warhol: Paris/New York
Photography and Fame
Gordon Baldwin and Judith Keller
"A fascinating study of two artists and the nature of fame and image."
—*The Bloomsbury Review*
$60.00

At bookstores or Getty Trust Publications · 800-223-3431 · www.getty.edu/publications

GETTY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Balthus executed a few years before Stanislas's book was published. Pretty soon, all of this begins to sound and to look a lot like the alchemy in Balthus's studio—a place that seems filled with a quietly loony optimism about the chances for turning the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Balthus probably takes it for granted that every time an artist talks about painting, he is dreaming of absolutes. No wonder that he remarks to Weber that "my point of view is extremely vague....What I don't like is to nail down a conception." When you are in the labyrinth, you have to trust your gut. Sitting in the studio at Rossinière, Claude Roy asks Balthus about "the white of the cloth under the cat" in the *Cat with Mirror III*, the painting that was then on the easel. He wonders if this is lead white or zinc white. It turns out to be neither. Balthus, Roy explains, "mistrusts this latter white, which dries badly and cracks. He enumerates the comparative merits and defects of flake white (in fact ceruse) and other whites." This is precisely the matter-of-fact tone in which alchemists once considered the properties of the natural elements that they set out to transform.

In returning, time and again, to what he insists are the concerns of an artisan, isn't this extraordinarily practical artist really always dreaming about transformation, about metamorphosis, about alchemy? Which is not to say that the shop-talk of the artisan is a mask for the ambitions of the alchemist. What Balthus has been trying to tell us all these years is that the artisan and the alchemist are one and the same. ■

Brackish Beads

By RONALD STEEL

Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan by Edmund Morris

(Random House, 874 pp., $35)

LET US PITY Ronald Reagan, reduced to being a prop in his own biography. This is definitely not the role of a lifetime. And let us also be gentle with Edmund Morris. It is not easy to walk away from $3 million, no matter how bored you are with the duty of writing about the former president, or how desperate you are to think of an original angle. Consider, too, the plight of the hapless editor at Random House, tormented by his corporate overlords in Hamburg to get their money back.

Prodded and besieged, the blocked writer comes up with an idea. He will write a novel with himself as protagonist and Reagan as the other man. But of course he will not call it a novel. He will call it a "memoir." And he will cleverly conceal that the "memoir" really is of him, not of Reagan. He will propose this as a startlingly new literary device that will allow him to penetrate into the deepest mysteries of the inner and otherwise impenetrable Reagan. He will be a semi-real, semi-imaginary narrator who happens to be around during key moments in his subject's life (do we hear echoes of Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*?); he will be an impassive instrument of perception (Christopher Isherwood's *I Am a Camera*?); he will create an omniscient observer who cannily plays the fool to learn the secrets of the court (Robert Graves's *I, Claudius*?).

The flabbergasted editor throws up his hands, naturally. The accountants are pounding at his door. Disaster looms. After all these years, after all those dollars, the writer has delivered a bag of lemons. But he will rise to the occasion. He will make lemonade. In that historic moment, *Dutch* is born. The book will be marketed as a "groundbreaking literary character study ... employing a unique narrative technique." The rest is show business.

And what a triumphant bit of show biz it has been! There have been endless interviews and reams of discussion about the author's technique, but little on the ostensible subject of the book. The method has become the message. The media, as is their wont, have become entranced by a public relations gimmick. Lost in the shuffle is poor Reagan, wandering in and out of the book as a sidekick to the narrator. The trick is the story about *Dutch*, just as the production cost was the story about *Titanic*.

The promotional campaign has been so successful that it seems churlish to complain about the quality of the product. But surely Edmund Morris has invited our critical attention. He has told us that his fictional narrator (or sort of fictional, since he bears an uncanny resemblance to the author and even shares his name) is the only way of getting at the "mystery" of Reagan. Leaving aside the question of whether Reagan is really any more mysterious than anyone else, one can ask how entering the land of Oz in which, as the author tells us, "the past is delusion, the future illusion," helps us to penetrate the mystery. But then, as Morris says, "one locates one's center where one can." So relax, gentle reader, as you are transported into the writer's post-modernist empyrean.

WHERE MORRIS HAS located his center is precisely upon himself, the ubiquitous narrator whose semi-autobiographical character is much more developed than that of Reagan himself. One gets the feeling that Reagan was just the window of opportunity into the autobiographical novel that Morris wanted to write. But how to sell such a "biography"? As literature, of course; as a literary innovation. "I want to make literature out of Ronald Reagan," we are told that Morris informed his publishers. They cannot claim that they were not warned.

It is highly unlikely that this is what Nancy Reagan, Michael Deaver, and the other guardians of the Gipper's flame had in mind when they anointed Morris as "authorized biographer" and gave him roaming privileges in the White House. But they were certainly aware of his major credential for the task: an 863-page celebration of the young, pre-presidential Theodore Roosevelt. That book, as Morris reminds us, pleased many readers and won some prizes with its tales of high adventures and of adversities triumphantly surmounted. Reagan's minders may have thought that they were going to get another boys' adventure story—a biography like Morris's book on TR, mercifully devoid of any serious discussion of politics or any critical assessment of character.

To be sure, this would be a curious way to approach Ronald Reagan. However one feels about his presidency, it was deeply political, and it had a profound impact on the nation's economic structure and foreign policy. But that would have clouded the desired image. What the Reagan team seems to have wanted was a writer with an ability, like Reagan himself, to weave enchanting stories and not to raise troublesome questions. Indeed, it was probably

---

RONALD STEEL's new book, *In Love with Night: The American Romance with Robert Kennedy*, will be published by Simon & Schuster in the spring.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

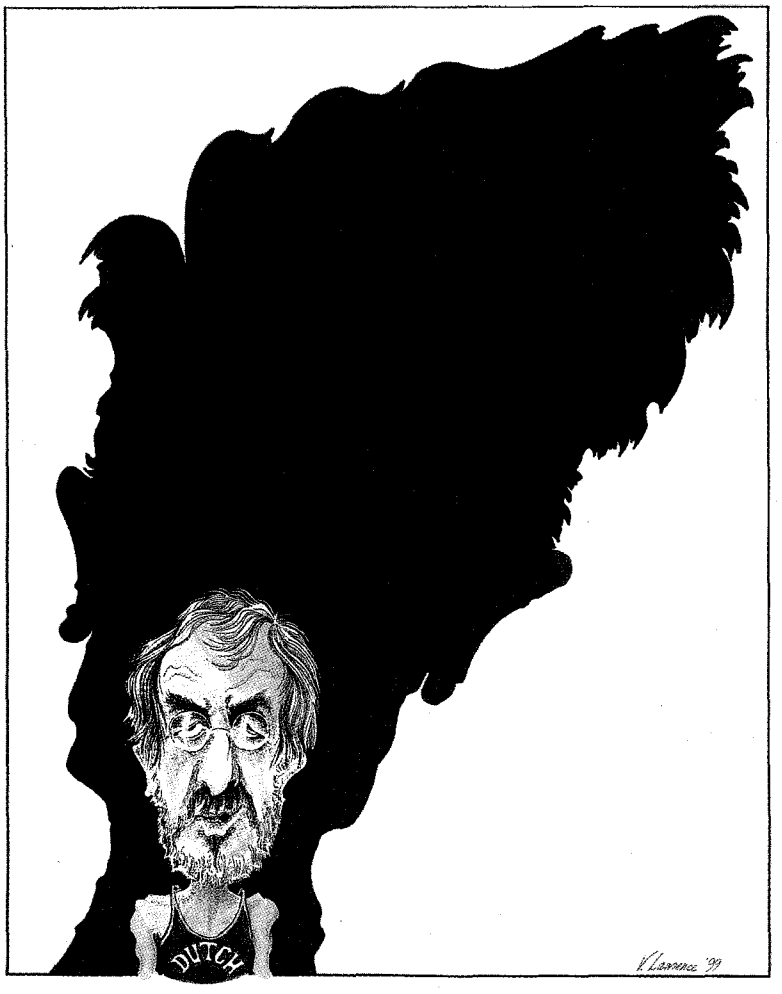
Morris's lack of interest in politics that attracted them. They, too, wanted to make literature out of Ronald Reagan.

They must have been confirmed in their assessment following their first meeting with Morris at a dinner party. In 1983, he sent the host a memo regarding his approach to a Reagan biography. "In the end," he wrote, "what chiefly survives, or *should* survive, of any Chief Executive is the quality of his personality." What a curious statement. If all that survived of the hapless Warren Harding was his amiable "personality," he would be deemed one of our finest presidents, and the duplicitous Bill Clinton one of our worst. Both judgments would be wrong. Of course, any would-be biographer focusing on Reagan's universally agreeable "personality" rather than on his controversial politics would not seem threatening to those offering access.

This is not to accuse Morris of tailoring his judgment to please his patrons. Indeed, he is at times mildly critical of Reagan, at one point describing him as an "apparent airhead." He approaches him with an air of bemused condescension. It is rather that the issues for which the Reagan presidency will be remembered—Star Wars, budget-busting, Iran-Contra, Third World proxy wars, economic recovery, the Gorbachev challenge—do not at all engage Morris's imagination. Although he attended White House meetings and met monthly with the president, Morris offers no insight into the internal politics of the administration that we have not already had from other writers. Neither does he bring any new angle to Reagan the president. He is a storyteller who seems bored with politics.

It is all very well to talk about "personality." But what one expects from a biographer is an elucidation of how personality—or more precisely, character—affects the decisions made and the policies pursued by a political figure. We are right to care about character, because it is the key to behavior. We read biographies because we want to know *why* people did, or wrote, or thought, what they did.

The problem with Morris's book is that it does not do this. There is Reagan the "personality" and Reagan the president, and their orbits do not really cross. The fact that Reagan does not even become president until the final third of the book is an indication of the importance that Morris places on this aspect of his life. The first 400-odd pages are a curious pastiche of self-referential musings by the fictional "Edmund Morris": imaginary dialogues, film scenarios, diary entries, and the like. These, we are told, reflect the author's belief that "the president was primarily a phenomenon of the American imagination." In fact, what we get is not the American imagination, it is the author's imagination, working less on Reagan than on himself.



Edmund Morris by Vint Lawrence for The New Republic

The reason that *Dutch* is so long is that it is really two books: the novel that Morris obviously wanted to write, and the political biography that he was paid to produce. The novel, into which Reagan drops from time to time, relates the frustrations, the adventures and the occasional triumphs of a writer who observes but is hardly noticed by the subject of his inquiry. The device of the camera is not necessarily a bad one. The problem is that Morris has it pointed the wrong way, focusing on himself rather than on Reagan.

The fictional character that Morris has created is a moderately interesting one: aesthetic, resentful, neurotic, self-aggrandizing, and of an intellectual pretentiousness so broad that it must have been meant to be funny. (Well, maybe not.) Never failing to reach for a French phrase where an English one would do nicely, he is constantly feeling a sudden *frisson* or even a *coup de foudre*, and is amused by Reagan's *folies de jeunesse* and his *petits moments d'embarras*, and sympathetic to his *moments critiques*.

There is something almost endearing about this fictionalized narrator, with all his status anxieties and his snobbish resentments. "Edmund Morris" is certainly the most realized character in the book. It is too bad that Morris was not able to use his narrative talents to make Reagan more alive. Perhaps he should have written a real autobiography, narrated by the fictional Reagan. Then we could have had Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern as seen by Hamlet.

The key to Morris's view of Reagan may be found in the title that he has chosen. "Dutch" was not the way in which people addressed the president, or the governor, or even the film star. It was the moniker of the handsome lifeguard who pulled imprudent swimmers out of the water during the summers of his student years. Young Dutch, you see, came to the rescue of those who needed help. And old Dutch did, too. He was the "lifeguard who rescued [America] in a time of poisonous despair."

But was not Reagan a bit, shall we say, *dégagé*? Yes, but remember that he was a swimmer, one who "tunnels along in a shroud of silvery bubbles, insulated from any sight or sound." How to explain Reagan's aloofness and his stubborn certainty? Because *"he sees the world as a swimmer sees it."* The italics are Morris's. What a clever metaphor! But maybe it is too clever. Had Reagan not been a swimmer, might he have rejected supply-aide economics, or not sent weapons to Iran, or become a tree-hugger? If he had not saved

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

77 people from drowning, might he not have believed that he could save 250 million by putting up a missile "shield" in the sky? Or maybe he would have been less responsive to Gorbachev, who in his own way was a kind of lifeguard for his drowning people.

Dutch might work better as a movie script. That is the way, Morris tells us, that his book on Theodore Roosevelt began. The visuals would be terrific: Dutch auditioning for his first screen role; Dutch facing down the rioters at Berkeley; Dutch at the Berlin Wall. And of course Dutch the young lifeguard, as he "shrugged off the top of his damp suit [and] the loops fell away, leaving behind pale ghosts of themselves."

However long it took him to figure out an angle, Morris seems to be having a good time with his book, except for the obligatory political parts. It allows him to be as curmudgeonly as he pleases, to spin the most improbable metaphors, and to indulge himself to the extent of including the three poems with which this very long "memoir" wears down. (This is the first stanza of the one dedicated "To R.R.": "These leaves your lips will sink as rot they must/Too logged at length to ride up and down/Of us who mingling mixed our brackish beads/And bore you up, and washed you of your dust.")

So more power to you, Edmund Morris. You liberated the *romancier manqué* festering inside every script writer, got handsomely paid for doing so, demoted Reagan to the supporting cast (where's the rest of him?), and with great *panache* turned a potential *désastre* into a *succès fou*, if not quite a *succès d'éstime*. You get the prize for (pardon my French) *chutzpah*. ■

The Bosom of History

By DAVID FREEDBERG

Rembrandt's Eyes by Simon Schama

(Knopf, 750 pp., $50)

I.

PAGE AFTER PAGE in this large and sumptuous book, Simon Schama offers some of the finest and most vivid prose by any history writer of our time. Schama's study of Rembrandt is crowded with notions that are smart, witty, and moving. Might the excesses of his writing have been restrained? Perhaps not. Much of the achievement of Schama's book is owed to its excess, its abundance, its learned luxuriousness. *Rembrandt's Eyes* has something in it of the voluptuousness and the humanity not so much of Rembrandt as of Rubens, the other hero of this vast canvas—particularly the domestic Rubens, the lover of children and of the comforts of home, the painter of sumptuous altarpieces and abundant female flesh. The largeness of this book is not least a measure of the largeness of its author's heart.

DAVID FREEDBERG is Professor of Art History at Columbia University. He is the author of *The Power of Images* (University of Chicago Press) and the forthcoming *The Eye of the Lynx: Galileo, His Friends, and the Beginnings of Modern Natural History*.

Rembrandt's Eyes opens with a stunning set piece about the siege of 's Hertogenbosch in 1629. Who besides Schama could have thought of opening a book about Rembrandt with such an account? Or of footnoting a reference, in the very first sentence of the book, to the nightingales heard fluting over the artillery? Certainly nothing in recent historical writing even begins to match the vivacity of Schama's description of the sounds, the sights, and the smells of war, its putrid terrors and its noisy pleasures. It is Spielbergian in its attention to the telling detail.

Nobody else delivers page-turners like this. No reader could fail to be swept along by the narrative drive (where no connection, however remote or unexpected, is ever missed), or by the great word-pictures, the passages of fabulous description, each one studded with words that you have never heard before, or phrases that make this particular historical moment or that strange and long-forgotten individual achingly present. The great ancient writers of ekphrases, or descriptions of lost or non-existent paintings, would have had much to learn from Schama. All this rests on an impressive command of the material. And Schama's scholarly courtesy is rare and exemplary; he thanks everyone who ever helped him or gave him a suggestion, from established scholars to students still working on their dissertations. Not a note of ill temper crosses these 750 pages.

The book is an extraordinary achievement, above all in its rich and convincing portrait of everyday life in Holland in the seventeenth century, in peace and in war, in commerce and in art, in public and in private. Schama tells the affecting stories of Rubens, Rembrandt, and their families; it is in his allusions to domesticity, and to the interactions between the artists and their wives, that Schama is at his most passionate. And how beautifully he frames his stories! After the wrenching bankruptcy of 1658, for example, and the sale of his house and his possessions, Rembrandt's beloved son Titus manages to redeem a large ebony and silver mirror, of which they were all evidently rather fond, from the city pawnbroker. Anyone who knows Amsterdam will understand how difficult it must have been to lug such a thing across the narrow bridges over the canals. Inevitably, the mirror falls—and "there it was in front of Titus, shivered into a thousand pieces, the shards and slivers glittering on the brick paving, leaving the boy to carry back to his father a frame without a center, a picture of nothing." Only Schama could have conjured up a sentence like that—even if you wonder how a picture comes into it.

THERE IS A struggle in Schama's book. It lies in the effort to make the narrative as seamless as possible, and to force it past the inevitable longueurs. Often it seems as if Schama knows exactly when you are beginning to yawn—and then he produces some lovely surprise, some unexpected reading, some verbal pyrotechnics (the book is full of fireworks, real as well as literary). Examples abound. *The Nightwatch* is extravagantly set up as "the crowning glory of the Kloveniersdoelen, of Amsterdam, of Dutch painting, of all of Baroque art." Hard, really, to top that; and Schama doesn't quite know where to go in the wake of his extended discussion of the picture. Nor is he sure where to take his accounting of all the deaths in Rembrandt's family, above all the death of his beloved Saskia, in the months after the triumph of that painting. But he has something in reserve, and it will do—in a way, magnificently: "Death's sear hand," he writes, "as all Good Christians knew, could stretch out and chill the warmest body." What more could be said?

But then he turns, appropriately enough, to the Bible, and then, in a fine act

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of authorial prestidigitation, produces a passage from Ecclesiastes: "As the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." And with this as his cue, Schama moves right on to two of the most puzzling pictures in the Rembrandt corpus, two pictures that have always stumped the commentators, the *Girl with Dead Peahens* (circa 1639, if it is by Rembrandt at all) in Amsterdam and the *Hunter with Dead Bittern* (1639) in Dresden. These pictures are problematic because the juxtaposition of the birds with the figures is so anomalous—for Rembrandt as a painter, and for the iconographic tradition more generally. It is a moving transition, if not altogether convincing; and it offers a suitable pretext for Schama to conclude, correctly, that the meaning of the pictures is not exhausted by reference to the fact that art historians have made much of in recent years—that "to bird" (*vogelen*) meant, in contemporary slang, "to fuck."

For the most part, Schama wants Rembrandt's pictures to be serious; and for the most part, he is right. In his general claims, Schama often reasserts the obvious with eloquence. But sometimes it is important to do this: one or two of the most distinguished Rembrandt scholars of our time have actually denied that Rembrandt, in his pictures, was (as Schama puts it) "an orchestrator of emotion." Time and again, Schama insists on the ways in which the paintings and the prints are profound experiments in the painted expression of emotion. His interpretations of the emotional dimension of paintings such as *Judas Returning the Thirty Pieces of Silver* (1629) will stand as benchmarks for a long time. Schama shows, for example, just how closely the abject and remorseful figure of Judas corresponds with the contemporary description of the painting by Constantijn Huygens, Rembrandt's earliest biographer; and he makes clear how far the painter's achievement here boldly departed from the requirements of classical history painting at the time.

Schama is always attentive to color and to the handling of paint, and while he is certainly incorrect in claiming that only he and Svetlana Alpers have argued that "the manipulated paint surface itself became the subject of his art," the passages in which he describes Rembrandt's colors and the handling of paint are memorable. I have not read a single other art historian so adept at describing the *matière*, the very stuff, of Rembrandt's pictures, or so knowledgeable about seventeenth-century pigments and the brushes used to applied them.

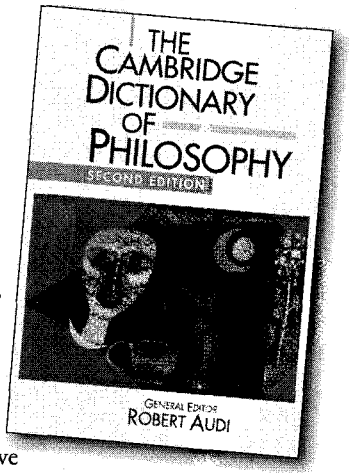
Here is the historian as sensualist. One

BACK AND BETTER THAN EVER

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy

Second Edition

Robert Audi, *Editor*



"...probably the best short reference book in English on philosophy."
–Richard Rorty, *Stanford University*

"a remarkable achievement..."
–Alasdair MacIntyre

"...a superb reference work..."
–Edward Said

"...Compact, clearly written, and covering a vast range of topics..."
–Sissela Bok

"...an essential reference work..."
–Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

This second edition includes the most comprehensive entries on major philosophers, 400 new entries including over fifty on preeminent contemporary philosophers, extensive coverage of rapidly developing fields such as the philosophy of mind and applied ethics, more entries on non-Western philosophy than any comparable volume, and increased coverage of Continental philosophy.

0-521-63136-X	Hardback	$74.95
0-521-63722-8	Paperback	$29.95

Available in bookstores or from

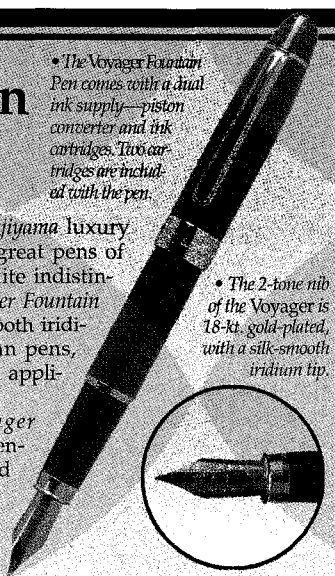
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
40 West 20th Street, N.Y., NY 10011-4211
Call toll-free 800-872-7423
Web site: www.cup.org
MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.

Enter a whole new world of writing pleasure...

Voyager Fountain Pen still only $49.95*

***But read this ad for an even better deal!**

• *The Voyager Fountain Pen comes with a dual ink supply—piston converter and ink cartridges. Two cartridges are included with the pen.*



• *The 2-tone nib of the Voyager is 18-kt. gold-plated, with a silk-smooth iridium tip.*

The *Voyager Fountain Pen*, another in the line of *Fujiyama* luxury writing instruments, is equal or superior to the great pens of Europe and America in function and appearance, quite indistinguishable in heft and feel. The 2-tone nib of the *Voyager Fountain Pen* is heavily 18-kt. gold-plated, tipped by a silky-smooth iridium point. Just as those fine European and American pens, Voyager pens are tastefully decorated with gold-plated applications and pocket clip.

The truly astonishing thing about the *Voyager Fountain Pen* is the price. We are the exclusive representatives of these fine writing instruments in the United States. We can therefore bring you this superior fountain pen for just $49.95. Compare that to the $150 to $250 that you would expect to pay for equivalent U.S. or European luxury fountain pens. But we have an even better deal. ***Buy two for $99.90, and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!*** If you now write with ballpoint pens you can't know what a pleasure it is to write with liquid ink and with a truly fine fountain pen. The pen flows effortlessly across the paper—there is no need to exert pressure. You can write on and on without tiring. Start writing with what many believe to be the finest, or certainly equal to the finest, writing instruments in the world, get incredible savings and order your *Voyager Fountain* Pen(s) today!

You may order by toll-free phone, by mail, or by fax and pay by check or Visa/MasterCard. Please give order number #1001F339. Add $4.95 standard shipping/insurance charge for one, $9.90 for three (plus sales tax for California delivery).. You have 30-day refund and one-year warranty. We do not refund postage. For customer service or wholesale information, please call (415) 643-2810.

since 1967
haverhills®
2360 Third St., San Francisco, CA 94107

Order by toll-free phone: (800) 797-7367 or (fastest!) by fax: (415) 643-2818

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the most striking sections in the book is a minute description of the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and even the tactile feels, of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century. Schama's recourse to the information of the five senses, recorded and imagined, is entirely apposite for a book on Rembrandt, since Rembrandt's earliest paintings took them as their subjects. You seem to be right there, tasting the chicory, purslane, burnet, borage, and *dent-delion*, for your mid-day salad; you catch the feeling, almost, of that soldier in the whorehouse or musico, "fumbling sweatily with a girl's chemise while two pairs of hands reciprocate his advances, one applying friendly pressure to his breeches, the other darting, quick as a mouse, in and out, a purse nimbly retrieved between finger and thumb."

COURTESY HERZOG ANTON-ULRICH MUSEUM, BRAUNSCHWEIG

Rembrandt, "A Family Group," c. 1666

But if only Schama had known when to stop! It is true that he gets the feel not just of Amsterdam, but also of Messina, Genoa, and parts of Rome, and these are all wonderful passages of historical sympathy and imagination; but when he describes how Rubens "clicked his tongue at the disdainful macaws" of the Genoese aristocracy, you begin to doubt. Too often the transitions seem to be forced by the simple need to keep the story going. It is as if he were always afraid of rupture. Seamlessly, again, but too artfully, Schama moves from his discussion of Rembrandt's painting of Jacob blessing the sons of Joseph to the fate of Rembrandt's own son Titus, and to one of Rembrandt's famous adaptations of Mughal drawings. Having commented on how, in the Mughal drawing, Shah Jehan chin-chucks his son, Schama cannot stop himself from referring to Titus as a youth, "who doubtless could have used the occasional chinchuck himself." Doubtless.

How much does it add to the picture that Schama has already so skillfully painted to say of Constantijn Huygens, Rembrandt's early promoter and patron, that in penning his poems, he formed his letters with "the tails from his v's flicking like a whip, white fingers gliding over the sheet"; or that Rubens had to put a good dog in his *Raising of the Cross* because Antwerp "was a very doggy town"; or that Caravaggio was "the ultimate corkscrew draftsman"; or that the "barefoot blonde" on a wing of Rubens's *Descent from the Cross* is "pure Veronese roll-in-the-hay sweet mischief"; or that the shiny head of the infant Christ on the same panel is like "a high-watt lightbulb powered by a spiritual generator"? Why does Schama have to be quite so flip about the alleged childishness of the paintings by Rembrandt's teacher Pieter Lastman, or about the Book of Tobit, where Tobit is described as having been blinded by "a load of hot sparrow guano," or, indeed, so patronizing about God himself, in the account of how both Rembrandt and Lastman illustrated the prophet Balaam's attempt at cursing the Israelites ("Understandably, God, who had already taken the trouble to ward Balaam off, was not especially happy about this...")?

Schama has interesting observations to make about the significance of Rembrandt's lovelock in the early *Self-Portrait* in Nuremberg, but then he cheapens it all by referring to the work as the picture of "a poet in heavy metal." In passages such as these, the striving for effect goes too far. Time and again we begin to think how much better the book would have been for a little more restraint, a little less speed (it shows many signs of haste), a little less urgency in bringing it to its conclusion. The book is too self-indulgent; and it reflects Schama's compulsion to cover almost everything. Sometimes everything is too much.

And still one notices an occasional omission. Schama might have paid a little more attention to Rembrandt's prints and drawings. I miss, for example, the remarkable etching, only apparently unfinished, of the painter in his studio, with its Pygmalion-like model, which tells so much about Rembrandt's studio practices, and about his theoretical views both on painting and printmaking; or the print of the "vogel Phoenix," with its clear allusion to Rembrandt's belief in his eventual triumph over fate. By contrast, the book's final section—with its three excursuses on Huygens's poem called *"Ooghentroost"* or "Balm for the Eyes" (as Schama translates it), on Rembrandt's deformed pupil Gerard de Lairesse, and on the sad fate of his daughter Cornelia in far-off Batavia—adds very little. These excursuses have their typically evocative, picturesque, and compelling moments, but how much more movingly the book would have been ended if he had left them all out, and concluded with his account of the *Simeon in the Temple* in Stockholm, where Simeon, behind his heavy lids (as Schama puts it), "has at last seen the light of salvation and is able at last to declare, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.'"

There are moments, in the reading of *Rembrandt's Eyes*, when you say to yourself: here, finally, is a writer about art and history who understands something about life—especially when it comes to the complex knot of relations between work and love. But even of this there is too much. You begin to tire of the repeated emphases on the salvific aspects of domesticity, of women, of the female breast. Twice in eight pages Schama refers to that moment in sacred history when the Virgin interceded for mankind by baring her breast to her son. On the second of these occasions, he makes an odd comparison with Rubens's mother, and says that she did not bare her own breast to the Prince of Orange (as the Virgin did to Christ) in order to have him free her adulterous husband from house arrest. This is both superfluous and bizarre.

For Schama, Rubens turns out to be just too seductive an example of the voluptuary, in person and in his paintings. This is a mistake. Too often Schama uses Rubens as a foil for his own luxuriant

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

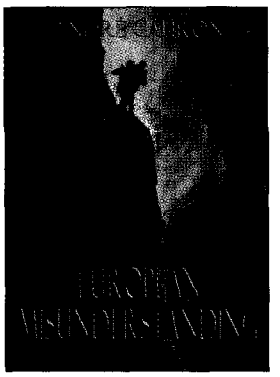
Nonplussed by World Events?
Come to Algora Publishing

A PASSION FOR DEMOCRACY:
BENJAMIN CONSTANT
Tzvetan Todorov

"Todorov's concise, vigorous analysis portrays the author of Adolphe and lover of Mme. De Stael as the first French analyst of democracy."
— *Publishers Weekly*
"A delightfully subtle and humane exploration of Constant the diarist, novelist, political theorist, and man."
— *Stephen Holmes, Princeton University*
$18.95 soft cover, 248 pp

EUROPEAN MISUNDERSTANDING
André Gauron

"Financial advisor to French PM Lionel Jospin, Gauron paints a picture of the 'chaotic' march toward European Union."
— *Le Monde*
$19.95 soft cover, 240 pp

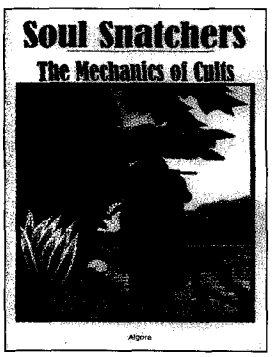


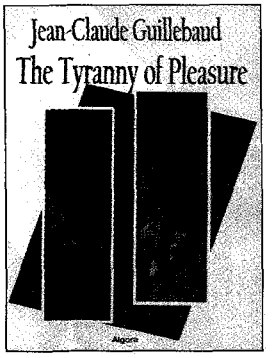
GEOPOLITICS OF CHAOS
INTERNATIONALIZATION, CYBERCULTURE & POLITICAL CHAOS
Ignacio Ramonet

"The director of Le Monde Diplomatique questions American optimism: is the same chain of events [that occurred in the East] likely to occur in the Western countries as well?"
— *Le Monde*
$18.95 soft cover, 178 pp

SOUL SNATCHERS
THE MECHANICS OF CULTS
Jean-Marie Abgrall

Met with instant success in France. "This is the first book to take an interdisciplinary approach to the cult phenomenon: how cults work, and how they manipulate people."
— *Le Matin*
$21.95 soft cover, 332 pp



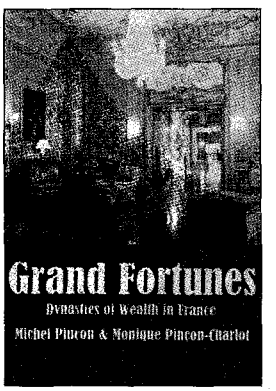


THE TYRANNY OF PLEASURE
Jean-Claude Guillebaud

"This provocative book asserts that 60's 'liberation' transformed the right into the duty to have an orgasm and declares war on our flagrant permissivity."
— *L'Evènement*
$24.95 soft cover, 382 pp

EURO ERROR
Jean-Jacques Rosa

A leading French economics and business professor decries the Euro, showing that actions taken to relieve unemployment have created inflation, but have not reduced unemployment.
$18.95 soft cover, 268 pp

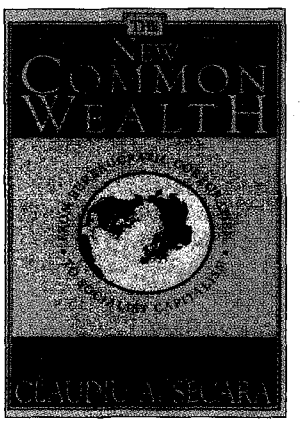


GRAND FORTUNES
DYNASTIES OF WEALTH IN FRANCE
Michel Pinçon and Monique Pinçon-Charlot

"In a nation known for democracy and meritocracy, piercing the secrets of the grand fortunes verges on a crime of lèse-majesté. Grand Fortunes succeeds at that."
— *LeCroix/L'Evènement*
$19.95 soft cover, 264 pp

THE NEW COMMONWEALTH
FROM BUREAUCRATIC CORPORATISM TO SOCIALIST CAPITALISM
Claudiu A. Secara

Elite-driven worldwide perestroika? "Examines the most intriguing dialectic in the Soviet Union's 'collapse' — from socialism to capitalism and back to socialist capitalism — and speculates on the global implications." — *Booklist*
$24.95 soft cover, 292 pp



Nonfiction for the Nonplussed

Tel (212) 678-0232 Fax (212) 663-9805
www.barnesandnoble.com www.algora.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

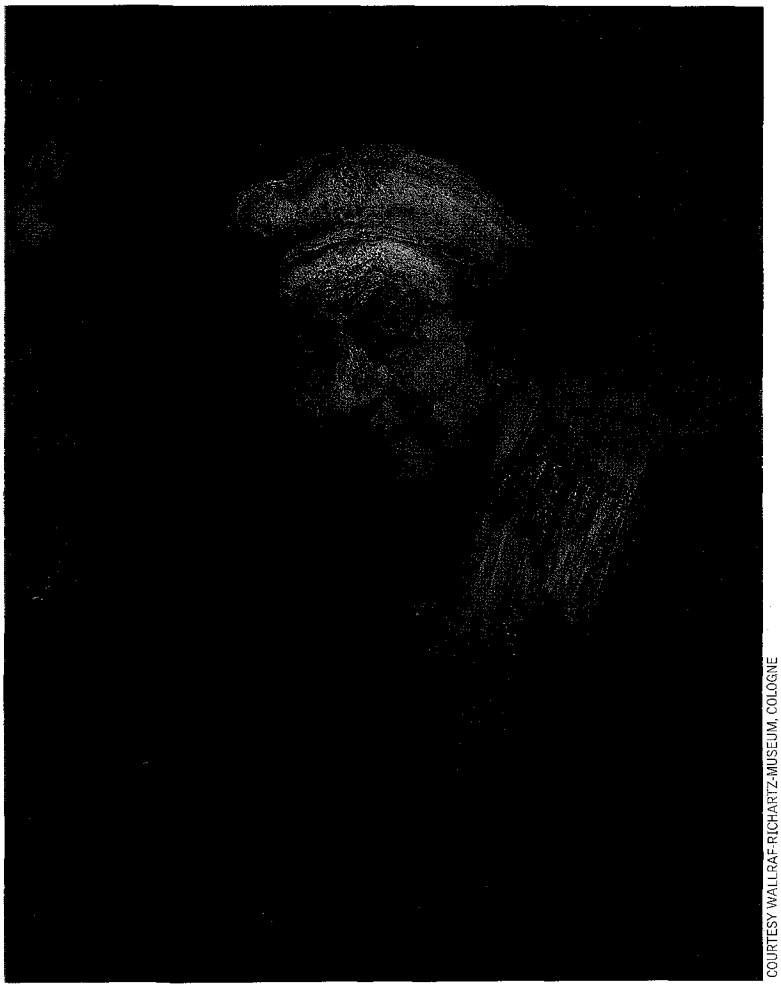
meditations on the female breast. In this manner, he slips into the trap of deriving far more than is justified about the person from the work. There is really no evidence at all to suggest that Rubens himself was the "lustiest celebrant of female voluptuousness in the history of Western art"; and all talk of his "strong animal nature" is little more than wishful thinking. (I was reminded of an old and distinguished art historian who once asked me whether I thought Rubens was good in bed.) There are some things that we cannot know.

Over and over again, Schama refers to the lusciousness and the succulence of some pair of breasts or another, to the "zaftig" and maternal qualities of the women in Rubens's as well as Rembrandt's life. And when it comes to the lower classes, he never loses the opportunity to remind his readers of the earthiness of the connection between nature and nurture. Amid the checkered scene at the siege of 's Hertogenbosch, for example, he pictures the "babes at the tit and snot-nosed urchins picking pockets or throwing back tankards of beer"; and in Rubens's great *Kermis* in the Louvre he identifies "the slurping pull of the babe on the mother's tit; a skirt riding high up the grimy thighs of a stomping dancer...." One begins to grasp the connections.

The high end of all this, of course, is the Virgin; and just below her comes *The Jewish Bride* in Amsterdam (we still have no idea whether she was Jewish or not) and the mother in the *Family Group* in Braunschweig; both paintings are among Rembrandt's greatest. Here Schama pays his highest tribute to the redemptive aspects of the breast. He describes how "the male hand [is] laid on a woman's breast, wife, mother; a gesture that seems to speak more profoundly to the point of life than anything else in the canon of Western art." A large claim! "For it speaks of passion and peace; of desire and rest; of nature and nurture; of family feeling as the salve of loneliness, the redemption of selfishness, the well of happiness." Some will find such prose moving; others will find it embarrassing.

Even so, Schama goes over the top with his next question, in another of his attempts to connect what really need not be connected—in this case, emotion and the technique, no, the very substance, of pictures.

> So should we be surprised to find that particles of egg have been discovered in beads of paint taken from the Jewish Bride? The chain of life, its profound, organic mystery, its vital pulse arising as desire, enacted in passion, and ending in abiding trust and companionship was the subject Rubens and Rembrandt chose to portray as the essence of humanity at the end of their lives, returning again and again to the dwelling-places of family affection.



COURTESY WALLRAF-RICHARTZ-MUSEUM, COLOGNE

Rembrandt, "Self-Portrait as Zeuxis," c. 1669

It is a noble conclusion (though it applies much more to Rubens than to Rembrandt); but it is all too neatly in keeping with the family values that are so frequently asserted throughout the book. Those of us who do not see the link between the egg in the paint and the meaning of life must cringe at the claim.

The book is full of repetitions. Twice in three pages we are introduced to "the Lorraine graphic artist Jacques Callot." I have no idea what the anachronistic term "graphic artist" (also used in connection with Jacques de Gheyn) is intended to mean. By page eleven, we are told twice that the Stadtholder Frederick Hendrick was seen as a new Alexander, which he wasn't much at all. Many times we are reminded, obviously as a neat piece of local color, that Rubens portrayed the church of San Teodoro on the Palatine; the term *furia del pennello*, misspelled at least three times, is used over and over again in connection with Rubens's paintings, in differing contexts, and not always correctly; and the same with the notion of the *Biblia pauperum*, a misleading reference to medieval illustrated paraphrases of the Bible, but adduced by Schama in relation to sixteenth-century religious writers on art. (And what on earth does Schama mean when he writes that "the mid-sixteenth century was more shockingly unintelligent than most other times"?)

Schama is blindly in love with his favorite epithets (to say nothing of his affection for the phenomena of tulips, virility, and breasts). Too often we hear of the "exopthalmic" eyes of Rembrandt's friends, sitters, and patrons; or of variations on that exopthalmic theme, of how people's eyes "popped out of their sockets" (in the case of Belshazzar in the London *Belshazzar's Feast*); or were "cow-like" (Rubens's second wife); or "feline" (his first wife); or just plain "beady" (poor Amalia van Solms, wife of the above-mentioned Alexander). There is too much coruscation throughout; people strut more frequently than they ought; more or less everyone is capricious; and pictures are too often shameless (twice in two consecutive sentences on page 167—and not just for effect!).

The book is a miracle of historical reconstruction, based on a profound sympathy for period and place; and yet, when you go through the many marvelous details on which Schama's picture is based, you find one mistake after another. This is not, in the end, a book in which God could be said to lie in the details—and yet the whole verisimilitudinous edifice is based on the details. Schama contends, for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

example, that in Leiden, in 1629, Constantijn Huygens "would have known and in all probability possessed" Callot's series of prints known as the *Petites misères de la guerre*. Schama makes much of the "irony of the French title...because it was not the miseries that were picayune but only the format of the etchings," and so on. The problem is that in the seventeenth century this series was not known as the *Petites misères de la guerre*. It became known as this only much later, in contrast with the larger series of prints known as the *Malheurs de la guerre*. A small error? Perhaps. But the plangent irony identified by Schama rather disappears in this case. Then he notes that the same series contained the striking image of ten men hanged from a tree, "in less than a square inch." But it didn't; it was the larger series, the *Malheurs*, that contained this "infinity of pain in a thimble." All trifling mistakes, maybe; but then you discover that the *Misères de la guerre*, the so-called *petites misères*, were not in fact published until 1635-36—seven years, in other words, after Huygens "would have known in and all probability possessed them." It shakes your confidence, this sort of thing.

And the expert reader (and the pedantic professor) will go on worrying. A *kenner* is less a "know-all," as Schama translates it, than a genuine connoisseur (of paintings—though perhaps all of us connoisseurs are know-alls); a *contrapposto* is certainly not "the confident setting of one leg at an angle to the other"; *ingenium* (inborn talent) is by no means the same thing as *inventio* (invention, or pictorial inventiveness, applied to the "discovery" of subjects and compositions); linseed oil has many qualities, but none of them can really be described as "astringent" (one of Schama's favorite adjectives); Rubens's mother does not write to her adulterous spouse hoping that he will love her as "you used to," but rather "as you pledged"—a large difference, in this context; Phillip Neri, who was generally skeptical about painting, did not think of painting as "a Biblia pauperum" (though Gregory the Great, whom Rubens painted in his altarpiece for the church rebuilt in Rome by Neri, probably did); the color of Rubens's *Descent of the Cross* can by no means be described as Titianesque; the baby figure of Plutus receiving milk from the breast of Pax in the London *War and Peace* is certainly not the ancient comic writer Plautus; Abraham Bloemaert's *Adoration of the Magi* could not have stood between Rubens's "two masterpieces of holy ecstasy, the Miracles of St. Ignatius Loyola and the Miracles of St. Francis Xavier" in the Jesuit Church in Brussels, since those two masterpieces stood in the Jesuit Church in Antwerp; there is no way in

Azure

Ideas for the Jewish Nation

New Issue

NO. 8
AUTUMN 5760 / 1999

The Political Stupidity of the Jews
Irving Kristol

The Israeli Supreme Court Packs Itself
Mordechai Haller

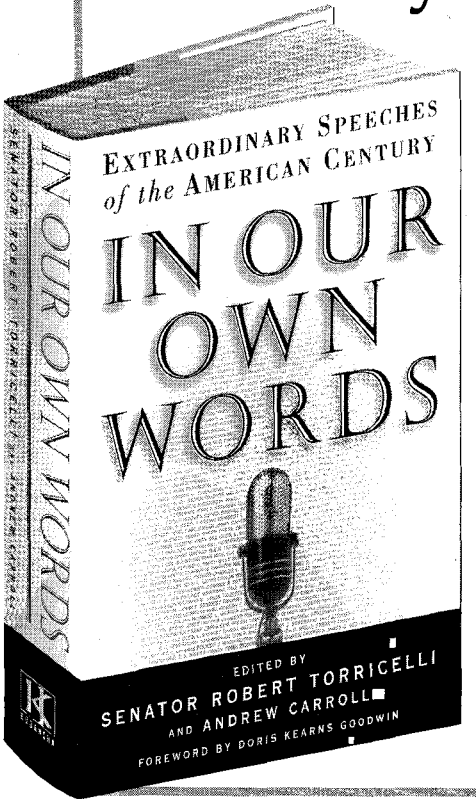
Russian Jews in Search of the Jewish State
Anna Isakova

Plus: Jeff Jacoby on Leon Wieseltier's 'Kaddish'

AZURE goes beyond the headlines to provide thought-provoking analysis of cultural and intellectual trends in the Jewish state and the Diaspora

To order, call 1-877-298-7300 or via E-mail at: Shalemorder@shalem.org.il

"History at its best."
—Robert Shrum



Timeless. Powerful. Transforming.

IN OUR OWN WORDS, edited by Senator Robert Torricelli and Andrew Carroll, bestselling author of LETTERS OF A NATION, is the most comprehensive collection of American oratory ever assembled, featuring more than 150 extraordinary speeches by Americans from all walks of life. Beginning in 1900 and continuing to the present day, here are the words of poets and politicians, artists and astronauts, scoundrels and sports heroes, Native Americans and Nobel laureates, soldiers and civil rights activists, humorists and hellraisers —in speeches that have influenced, enraged, and electrified the nation for the past century.

"Settle down for a fabulous journey through ten decades of American history."—Doris Kearns Goodwin

Available at bookstores everywhere

KODANSHA
Distributed by Oxford University Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which the purely religious term of a *hortus conclusus*, a symbol of virginity, can be applied, as it is twice, to Rubens's own garden (especially in the light of the fact that for Schama Rubens's gardens, at least in his pictures, are places of "orgiastic humanity," whatever that may be). And all this from the introductory section on Rubens alone!

Every now and then Schama attempts some radical rereading of a painting; but he pushes the available evidence much too far in his efforts to rename Rembrandt's *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer* (1653) as *Apelles Contemplating the Bust of Homer*, or to prove that the profound and deeply allusive *Self-Portrait as Zeuxis* (1669) in Cologne actually shows the ancient philosopher Democritus laughing at the follies of the world. The Cologne picture, Rembrandt's last, is so trenchant precisely because in it Rembrandt does *not* just show himself as Zeuxis, the other great painter of antiquity beside Apelles, to whom both he and Rubens—but especially Rubens—were often compared. Nor does Rembrandt allude to himself as the Zeuxis who was a master of pictorial illusionism (as in the case of the famous competition with Parrhasios), or as the Zeuxis who portrayed ultimate beauty in women (as in his decision to paint a Helen on the basis of features selected from the five most beautiful maidens of Croton).

Neither of these were comparisons that much interested Rembrandt. Instead, he chose to show himself at work, laughing, and painting an ugly old woman. Thus he alluded to the third and very much less common story about Zeuxis, in which the painter is said to have died laughing in the course of painting an ugly old woman. What better justification could Rembrandt have found for the very kinds of works that he was bitterly criticized for producing throughout his life—the scruffy self-portraits of his early years, the threadbare beggars of Leiden and Amsterdam, the female nudes with the stretch marks and sagging flesh offering him so many opportunities for the visible display of his own unmatched conception of pictorial beauty?

II.

BUT IS THERE an argument in *Rembrandt's Eyes*? I must disclose that in the book's acknowledgments Schama thanks me for "continually provoking" him "to think harder and more subtly about Rembrandt and Rubens." Did he think hard enough? Schama's book is in fact far less about Rembrandt's eyes than about Rembrandt's relation with Rubens. And there is an argument. The argument is that Rembrandt's work was in some fundamental way defined by an agonistic competition with Rubens's work.

Never mind that the argument, right or wrong, does not quite justify the 155-page section (and the many subsequent pages) devoted to the Flemish master, whom Rembrandt never met. Is the argument right? Certainly Rembrandt was aware of the work and the reputation of the diplomat-painter who was thirty years older and admired throughout Europe. Certainly Rubens's famous and fluent works represented a kind of unattainable paragon for the rough miller's son from Leiden. Rembrandt would never gain anything like the same degree of social acceptance as Rubens did; nor would he become a favorite of princes, prelates, and kings. Rubens was a Catholic, not a Protestant, a painter-knight, not a painter of beggars; he was conventional, not an outcast, and professionally successful in a way that Rembrandt would never be. Nor would Rembrandt achieve the same degree of domestic stability and felicity as Rubens, or the self-assurance and the sense of security that the Fleming so confidently radiated.

Schama revels in these contrasts, and discovers many new ones; but how much the differences between their lives have to do with the particular qualities of their art presents a typical biographer's conundrum, which Schama does not quite resolve. There is no question that in painting his own works, Rembrandt often bore Rubens's compositions in mind, and that he emulated them both deliberately and unconsciously. Schama is sensitive to almost all such moments in Rembrandt's art. But at one late point in the book Schama refers to Rembrandt's "repeated tic of quoting Rubens." This is surely misleading. A tic, one assumes, is involuntary, but Schama himself goes to great lengths to demonstrate how such adaptations as there were (for there were very few actual quotations) were both considered and conscious.

Occasionally Rembrandt did borrow from Rubens in imaginative and unexpected ways. Thus Schama reminds the reader of the curious indebtedness of *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* (1632) to Rubens's *Tribute Money* of about sixteen years earlier; and he makes very fine observations about the relationship between the 1636 *Samson and Delilah* in Frankfurt and Rubens's *Prometheus* of around 1611 in Philadelphia; and he is generally attentive to those areas in which Rembrandt either borrowed from the Flemish master (usually via reproductive prints), or was influenced by him. It is hardly surprising that Rembrandt should occasionally have had recourse to Rubens's brilliant and poignant religious inventions, borne from the depths of his Catholic soul—especially in the case of compositions such as the *Crucifixion* and the *Descent from the Cross*, where Rubens indeed provided the gold standard of his day. And Rembrandt could hardly not have been aware of Rubens's high status, or not have admired the originality and the vitality of his inventions. Rembrandt probably *was* anxious, sometimes, about the fame that Rubens's paintings had won for the artist, or about the unmatchable spontaneity and fluency of Rubens's forms and his handling of paint. Still, as Schama himself shows, there were other artists with whom Rembrandt was just as competitive—Titian, most notably.

In truth, if one wants to explain what was essential about Rembrandt, one cannot begin with Rubens. One cannot even set Rubens up as Rembrandt's inspirational rival. For Rembrandt's art is fundamentally different from Rubens's art. There is nothing in Rubens to correspond with Rembrandt's agonized and deliberate thought about the self. Nothing in the Fleming matches the Dutch artist's deep and relentless engagement with the effects of paint, and of the etched line. Rubens's stature is owed to a kind of fluency—psychological as well as formal—that Rembrandt never achieved. This was not for want of ability, but because Rembrandt chose to conceive of his art—of the nature of art itself—in an entirely different way than Rubens, in a way that marks him out as the initiator of a new epoch, not as the culmination of the old one.

It is hard to see the point of Schama's long account of Rubens's father's adultery with the wife of William of Orange—except, perhaps, as a kind of "explanation" for Rubens's affection for his mother and, maybe, for all women. It is even less clear why, in a book that is really about Rembrandt, and that tries to be nothing less than an exhaustive study of his life and his art, there should be such a long and detailed account of the history of the Southern Netherlands during the revolt against Spain; or of the vicissitudes of Rubens's voyage from Mantua to Spain in 1602; or of the fate of his paintings during the French Revolutionary occupation of Antwerp; or of the Nazi idolatry of Rubens.

THERE IS A larger and more critical question here, a methodological question about the writing of history. Schama's book exemplifies a historiographical sensibility for which evocation and enthusiasm usurp the place of analysis. The trouble is that, for the full understanding of the past, evocation, however brilliant, and enthusiasm, however infectious, and narrative, however riveting, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

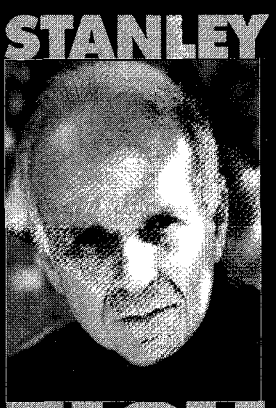
anecdote, however telling, are not quite enough. We may be transported, for the moment, into the past; but the complexity of the motivations of people and the causes of events seem only superficially explored, and the relations between historical contexts and individual actions only dimly illuminated (for the light shines separately on each).

It is true that in the work of such fine historians as Emanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Carlo Ginzburg anecdotes are sometimes given an unprecedented pride of place; but the anecdotes are not deployed only for their effect, they are also analyzed thoroughly—and sometimes, especially in the case of their micro-historical epigones, they are analyzed to death. In recent years, we have heard more and more about the degree to which the writing of history resembles the writing of fiction, in that the historian selects his facts and colors them like writers of novels; but historians should beware of this newly popular notion. For sooner or later the reader of history, the professional and non-professional, will tire of color. Sooner or later the reader will want the historian to step back and take a hard and unemotional look at the stories and the intuitions, and attempt an abstract argument, and advance an idea, in the search for a deeper explanation. This is what is lacking in Schama's vivacious book: a reluctance to position himself as inescapably outside the past, to struggle with what is inevitably distant and alien, with what is ultimately *not* retrievable. Some sign of such a struggle is what we properly seek in a work of history.

You begin to realize that you have to come to Schama's book for the feelings, which are profound, and not for the ideas; for the broad brush, which is masterful, and not for the fine details. In this regard, it could be said that Schama is indeed close to Rembrandt ("the greatest master of the broad brush there ever was before the advent of modernism"), somehow always achieving the spirit of things and never worrying terribly much about the precision of his *fijnschilderij*, the kind of meticulous, licked, and over-detailed painting practised by a group of Rembrandt's Leiden epigones. They, of course, are nearly forgotten. Yet *Rembrandt's Eyes* will not soon be forgotten, owing to the splendor of its prose and its sovereign and generous humanity. At one point, Schama notes that "Rembrandt was less interested in finding the god in the man than the man in the god." This isn't entirely right, either, though it rings well. The important point is that it applies nicely to Schama himself, over and over again. This is one of those rare books in which the truly humane is returned to the humanities. ■

THE TROUBLE WITH PRINCIPLE

Stanley Fish is an equal opportunity antagonist, and here he turns with his customary gusto to the trouble with principle. He argues that there is no realm of higher order impartiality—no neutral or fair territory on which to stake a claim—and that those who invoke one are always making a rhetorical and political gesture. In the course of making this argument, Fish takes up questions about academic freedom and hate speech, affirmative action and multiculturalism, the boundaries between church and state, and much more. Sparing no one, he shows how our notions of intellectual and religious liberty are artifacts of the very partisan politics they supposedly transcend.
$24.95 cloth

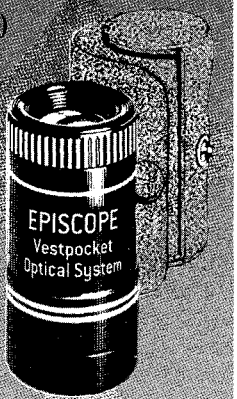


Harvard University Press
800 448 2242
www.hup.harvard.edu

More than just a telescope...more than just a microscope...

Episcope (the *complete* vest-pocket optical system)
Still only $59.95*

**But read this ad for an even better deal!*



Remove the *Episcope* from its fitted leather case and it's a 30-power microscope. A twist of the wrist converts it to a 3x telescope, or a unique 3x telescope-loupe. Another twist, and you have a choice of magnifiers and loupes: 5x, 10x, and 15x powers.

The *Episcope*, only 2" long, was developed in Wetzlar (Germany), the home of world-famous Leica cameras; it's now being made by one of Asia's finest lens makers. The optics are superb: brilliant luminosity, needle-sharp focus, absolute planarity, total chromatic correction, and fully anastigmatic.

• *Even at its highest magnification of 30x, the Episcope resolves as distinctly as any laboratory microscope, yet it is only 2" long. An optical miracle!*

The *Episcope* is the first choice of geologists, biologists, physicians, numismatists, philatelists, engineers, and just anybody who likes to see the infinite detail in his/her surroundings. It comes with a plastic "tripod" for extended observations at 15x or 30x magnifications.

***And here is the "even better deal": Buy two *Episcope* for $119.90 and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!**

You may order by toll-free phone, by mail, or by fax and pay by check or Visa/MasterCard. Please give order number **#1062F340.** Add $4.95 for ship./ins. and sales tax for CA delivery. You have 30-day refund and one-year warranty. We do not refund postage.

since 1967
haverhills®
2360 Third St., San Francisco, CA 94107

✆ Order by toll-free phone: (800) 797-7367 or by fax: (415) 643-2818 ✆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Impartiality in America

By GORDON S. WOOD

James Madison: Writings edited by Jack N. Rakove

(Library of America, 966 pp., $40)

IF HAVING ONE'S writings collected in a volume of the Library of America is a criterion, then James Madison at last has become a full-fledged Founding Father. Of the major Revolutionary leaders, only Franklin, Jefferson, and Washington have preceded him into what has become the American canon. Alexander Hamilton and John Adams still await entry, angry and frustrated no doubt by the fact that even the populist firebrand Thomas Paine has preceded them.

Such recognition of Madison is long overdue. Although he was the major architect of the Constitution, the father of the Bill of Rights, the co-author of *The Federalist*, the co-founder of the Democratic-Republican party in the 1790s, and the secretary of state in Jefferson's administration, he has been most often remembered as the rather bumbling president during the War of 1812 who was unable to prevent the British from invading Washington and burning the White House. But things are changing. In 1980 a new Library of Congress building was named after him, and not long ago Montpelier, Madison's home in Orange County, Virginia, was opened to visitors. Indeed, at present Madison's reputation as one of the founders has never been higher.

Perhaps the general public only now has begun to glimpse Madison's significance, but for several decades scholars have become increasingly aware of his importance. Along with Jefferson, Adams, Washington, and Franklin, Madison is one of the founders whose papers have been or are being published in massive modern editions that include virtually everything written by and to the subject. With the Supreme Court's discovery of the Bill of Rights as a source of constitutional interpretation in the last half of the twentieth century, interest in Madison as the promoter of the first ten amendments has risen accordingly. One important indication of his recently enhanced reputation is the growing number of biographies. Since Irving Brant completed his six-volume biography (it appeared between 1941 and 1961), there have been at least four single-volume biographies—by Harold Schultz (1970), Ralph Ketcham (1971), Robert A. Rutland (1987), and Jack N. Rakove (1990)—and a masterful study of the aging statesman in retirement: Drew R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (1989). The biography by Rakove, who is the editor of this Library of America collection of Madison's writings, offers the best introduction to Madison's career. It is balanced and beautifully written and very short—less than two hundred pages.

Rakove has used his knowledge of Madison's life to make an excellent selection of documents for the Library of America's volume. The book contains nearly all the important essays that Madison wrote, including his twenty-nine contributions to *The Federalist Papers*, together with the most significant of his letters. Everything is arranged chronologically, so that we can follow the development of his political thought. And it is his political thought in which scholars are now most interested.

Charles Beard long ago tried to turn Madison into our very own economic determinist as an alternative to Marx, but it was not until 1938, when Edward Burns published *James Madison: Philosopher of the Constitution*, that scholars began to investigate his political thought with any thoroughness. Although Adrienne Koch wrote several studies of Madison's thinking in the 1950s and 1960s, Madison's reputation as a political theorist was advanced more importantly in those decades by a series of essays by the historian Douglass Adair and the political theorist Martin Diamond. With the appearance of Lance Banning's carefully argued *The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic* (1995) and Rakove's own *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (1996), Madison's eminence as a political thinker was assured.

By now most scholars have come to share the view that Madison was the most profound and original political theorist not only in the Revolutionary and Constitution-making period, but also in all of American history. If England has Hobbes and Locke, and France has Rousseau and Constant, then America at least has Madison. Indeed, convinced of the originality and the sophistication of Madison's ideas, many scholars have been stumbling over themselves in their desire to explore the implications of his political thought—less, it seems, for understanding the eighteenth century and more for understanding our own time. Since Madison was central to the creation of the Constitution, and since the "Founding," as we have come to call it, has become central to what kind of people we Americans are, Madison and his ideas have come to bear an extraordinary responsibility for the character of American politics and society.

Political theorists have been especially eager to treat Madison as America's foremost political philosopher, and have compiled a small library of works analyzing his (and Hamilton's) contributions to *The Federalist*. According to many political theorists, to understand Madison is to understand American politics. So, in Robert A. Dahl's formulation, Madison is the pluralist who unfortunately concocted our fragmented structure of government in order to protect minority rights at the expense of majority rule. According to Richard K. Matthews, by contrast, Madison is the symbol of a cold-hearted American liberalism that promotes a selfish individualism that has no sense of benevolence and cares only for material wealth and property. Or, most recently in Gary Rosen's hands, Madison is the innovative theorist of the social compact that is the foundation of natural rights and our limited constitutional government.

AS THESE STUDIES by political scientists and political theorists become more and more refined and precious, they seem to drift farther and farther away from Madison's eighteenth-century reality. Whatever his creativity and his originality may be, we have to keep in mind that Madison was not speaking to us or to the ages. He was very much an eighteenth-century man concerned with practical problems of nation-building, and with finding ideas that would prove persuasive to his fellow eighteenth-century countrymen. Even his contributions to *The Federalist* were hastily written polemical pieces designed to convince New Yorkers to ratify the Constitution. His world was not our world; indeed, our world would have been inconceivable to him. Thus in our efforts to relate his very

GORDON WOOD is University Professor and Professor of History at Brown University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

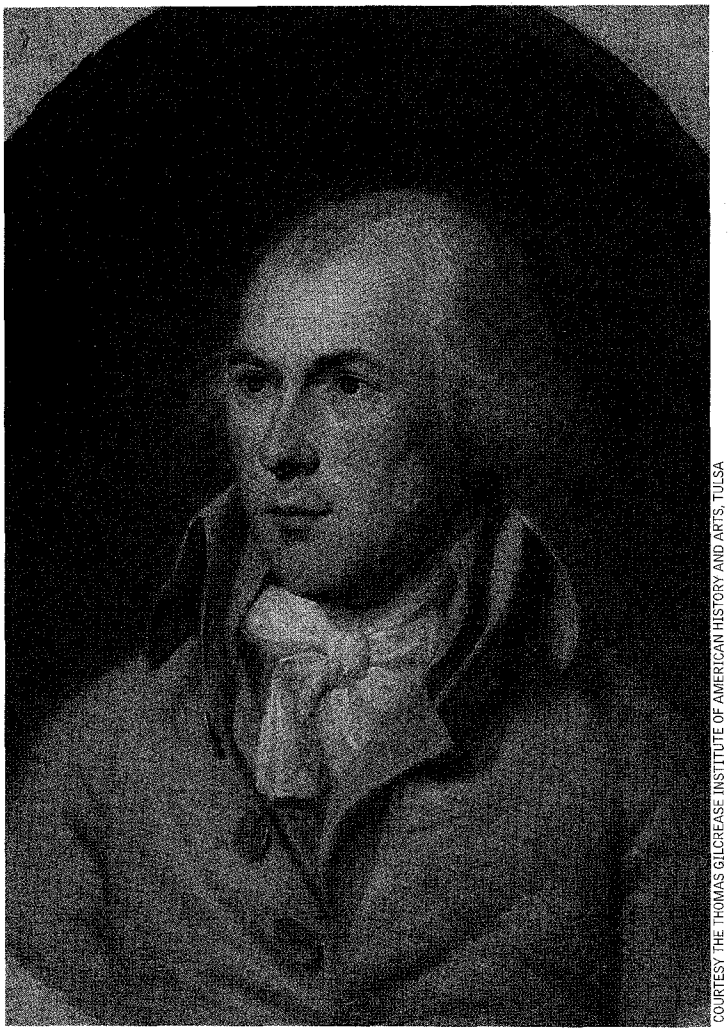
time-bound thinking to our present predicaments we run the risk of seriously distorting his world and what he was trying to do. And despite all of Madison's achievements, we run the risk of exaggerating his originality and his creativity.

Much of Madison's reputation comes from his central role in the formation of the new federal Constitution of 1787, and from his writing of twenty-nine of the eighty-five papers of *The Federalist*, especially *Federalist* No. 10, which has become the most famous document in the history of American political thought. Madison was the principal force behind the calling of the Philadelphia Convention that drafted the Constitution in the summer of 1787, and he was also the principal author of the Virginia plan that formed the working model of the convention. During the meeting he not only participated vigorously in the debates, he also took it upon himself to keep voluminous notes of the discussions. Indeed, it is mainly because of Madison's notes that we know so much about what went on in the convention. If anyone deserves the title "father of the Constitution," he certainly seems to.

If he was the father, however, he was not at all happy with his offspring. At the moment of the convention's completion, Madison could not have been more deeply disappointed with what he and his fellow delegates had created. If the Constitution were ratified, he told Jefferson in September 1787, it would never do what it was supposed to do. It "will neither effectually answer its national object nor prevent the local mischiefs which every where excite disgusts against the state governments." As far as he was concerned, the Constitution that he had done so much to bring about was a failure.

Madison had been thinking about reforming the existing government of the United States—the Articles of Confederation—ever since the early 1780s. Like many other American leaders, he had come to realize that the Confederation's inability to tax, to regulate commerce, and to maintain the dignity and the territorial integrity of the United States in international affairs demanded some major changes in the Articles. Yet Madison wanted to do more than deal with problems created by the weakness of the Confederation. He wanted to deal also with problems of politics in the states. It was this double purpose that made his constitutional proposals of 1787 so radical; and it was the failure of the Constitution to solve both the national and state problems that made him so despairing at the conclusion of the Convention.

In 1776, the revolutionary leaders had placed great confidence in the ability of the state legislatures to promote the public good and to protect the people's rights. In the succeeding years, however, many of them had come to believe that this earlier confidence was misplaced. The Revolution had unleashed acquisitive and factional economic interests that were demanding and receiving satisfaction from state legislatures which were now elected annually by the broadest electorates in the world. Everywhere in the states, electioneering and the open competition for office increased, as new uneducated entrepreneurs such as Abraham Yates, a part-time lawyer and shoemaker of Albany, and William Findley, a Scotch-Irish ex-weaver of western Pennsylvania, used popular electoral appeals to vault into political leadership in the state legislatures.



COURTESY THE THOMAS GILCREASE INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND ARTS, TULSA

Charles Willson Peale, "James Madison," 1804

No one saw more clearly what was happening than Madison. He himself witnessed this popular politics in the several states, but, more importantly, he experienced it himself as a member of the Virginia assembly in the 1780s. Madison was surprised to discover that his fellow legislators did not understand the legislative process. He found himself having to make legislative deals and trade-offs, agreeing to bad laws for fear of getting worse laws, or giving up good bills "rather than pay such a price" as his opponents wanted. His fellow legislators postponed taxes, subverted debts owed to the subjects of Great Britain, and passed, defeated, and re-passed bills in the most haphazard manner.

Legislators in all the states passed more laws than people could keep up with. In fact, Madison observed in 1786, they passed more laws in the decade since independence than had been passed in the previous century of colonial history. And those laws were not only constantly changing and multiplying, they were often unjust as well—passed on behalf of special interests in violation of the rights of creditors and other minorities. The state legislators had little comprehension of the collective good, even of their individual states, never mind of the United States. They were parochial and narrow-minded and bent on serving only the particular local interests of their constituents.

This pandering to the public, especially to its "itch for paper money," was the greatest evil of all. For it meant that appealing to the people as the ultimate arbiter of political disputes could have none of the beneficial effects that good republicans had expected. A Virginia bill having to do with court reform, for example, was "to be printed for consideration of the public," but "instead of calling for the sanction of the wise and virtuous," this appeal to the people, Madison feared, would only "be a signal to interested men to redouble their efforts to get into the Legislature." Democracy, in other words, was not the solution to the problem; democracy was the problem.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IRREVERENT!
OUTRAGEOUS!
ORIGINAL!
Perfect Gift for those who've "heard it all and had it up to here!"

Here's a sample -
America:
Land of the Fee and Home of the Rave.
200 pages + illustrations
Atom Bomb:
Made in America; tested in Japan.
Born-Again Christian:
You'd have thought once was enough.
Creationism:
I believe in Creationism: Man created God.
Hiroshima and Nagasaki:
To err is Truman.
Marriage:
The chief cause of divorce.

Marriage

Missionaries:
First they fell on their knees, then on the aborigines.
Pat Robertson:
A man of the cloth – cashmere.

Send $14.95 plus $4.00 shipping & handling to:
Contrarian Press
Dept. NR, 571 Front Street, Jamestown, NY 14701

CONSIDER THIS:

84% of TNR readers plan to travel in the next 12 months
91% of TNR readers dine out
92% of TNR readers purchased books in the past year
85% of TNR readers contribute to worthy causes
(Source: MRI 1999 Custom Subscriber Study)

GOT YOUR ATTENTION?

Advertise with The New Republic Small Space Program.

Contact Shannel Myers at (212) 924-8700 for reservations and information.

PUT YOUR MESSAGE IN FRONT OF 100,000 CONSUMERS!

What Madison saw as the vices of American state politics scarcely strikes us today as all that unusual or vicious. He only described what we now take for granted: popular American politics with all its horse-trading and pork barreling. We are not surprised or upset when representatives say they have to look after their constituents' interests. We are accustomed to our politicians running scared and being worried about their particular districts. That is what American democratic politics is all about.

However disillusioned Madison was with this democratic politics—this incessant scrambling for interests, this continual pandering to voters—by the mid-1780s he knew that it was an ineradicable part of American social reality. People inevitably had interests; and since they wished to protect those interests, they divided into political factions. The causes of faction, he wrote in the tenth paper of *The Federalist*, were "sown in the nature of man." It was utopian to expect most people to put aside these interests for the sake of some nebulous public good. Yet it would be a denial of liberty to try to eliminate them. And so Madison realized that the regulation of these private factional interests was becoming the principal task of modern legislation, which meant that the spirit of party and faction was likely in the future to be involved in the ordinary operations of government.

EVEN THOUGH MANY other Americans in 1787 were saying the same thing, we can only applaud Madison for his hard-headed realism, for his willingness to question the utopianism of some of his fellow republicans who had hoped in 1776 that the American people would have sufficient virtue to transcend their interests and act in a disinterested manner. And yet, when he continues with his analysis in *Federalist* No. 10, we begin to realize that he is not quite as cold-eyed and modern as we had thought.

No government, he wrote, could be just if parties, that is, people with private interests to promote, became judges in their own causes; indeed, interested majorities were no better in this respect than interested minorities:

> No man is allowed to be a judge in his own cause, because his interest would certainly bias his judgment, and, not improbably, corrupt his integrity. With equal, nay with greater reason, a body of men are unfit to be both judges and parties at the same time; yet what are many of the most important acts of legislation but so many judicial determinations, not indeed concerning the rights of single persons, but concerning the rights of large bodies of citizens? And what are the different classes of legislators but advocates and parties to the causes which they determine? Is a law proposed concerning private debts? It is a question to which the creditors are parties on one side and the debtors on the other. Justice ought to hold the balance between them. Yet the parties are, and must be, themselves the judges; and the most numerous party, or in other words, the most powerful faction must be expected to prevail.

Since the popular colonial assemblies had often begun as courts (the "General Court of Massachusetts"), and since much of their legislation had resembled adjudication, Madison's use of judicial imagery to describe the factional and interest-group politics in the state legislatures was understandable. Yet it was not new; and it pointed backward to the colonial world, not forward to our world. For all the brilliance of his diagnosis of interest-ridden popular politics in the states, Madison's remedy of dealing with that politics was very traditional, and ultimately it was perhaps just as utopian as the views that he was contesting.

Madison hoped that the new federal government might transcend parties, and become a kind of super-judge. It would become, as he put it, a "disinterested & dispassionate umpire in disputes between different passions & interests" in the various states. In fact, he hoped that the new government might play the same super-political neutral role that the British king ideally had been supposed to play in the empire.

IT WAS THIS kind of traditional thinking that led him to conceive of the Constitution as a solution not only to the weaknesses of the Confederation, but also to the problems of factious majorities in the states. Madison wanted the new national government to have a veto power over all state laws. Such "a negative *in all cases whatsoever* on the legislative acts of the states, as heretofore exercised by the Kingly prerogative," he told Washington a month before the meeting in Philadelphia, was "absolutely necessary" and "the least possible encroachment on the State Jurisdictions."

As Rakove has pointed out, this was an extraordinarily reactionary proposal. It evoked not only the infamous phrase of the British Declaratory Act of 1766, but also the royal veto that Jefferson had so bitterly denounced in the Declaration of Independence. Madison's proposal for this national power to negate all state legislation was a measure of just how disillusioned he had become with democratic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

politics in the states.

But how could this new national government become a neutral and disinterested umpire when the state governments had been unable to become so? "It may be asked," Madison said to Jefferson in October 1787, "how private rights will be more secure under the Guardianship of the General Government than under the State Governments, since they are both founded on the republican principle which refers the ultimate decision to the will of the majority." What, in other words, was really different about the federal government that would prevent it from succumbing to the same popular pressures and factious majorities that were besetting the state governments in the 1780s?

THE ANSWER THAT Madison gave to this question is the source of his reputation for originality. He set forth in a number of writings, including *Federalist* No. 10, his theory of an extended republic. Most theorists, Montesquieu most famously, had believed that only a small territory with a homogeneous population whose interests were essentially similar could sustain a republic. Madison now argued that the reverse was true: that an enlarged and elevated republic was more capable than a small republic of behaving in a sensible and judicious manner and of promoting the general good. Faction-ridden Rhode Island had become an object lesson that smallness held no advantages for good republican government. By extending the political arena over the whole nation, the number of interests and factions in the society would increase to the point where they would check one another and make it less likely that a factious majority could combine in government to oppress the rights of minorities and individuals.

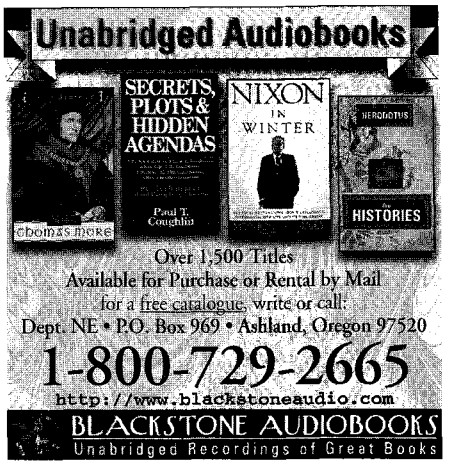
Douglass Adair suggested long ago that Madison may have borrowed an idea from David Hume in arriving at his theory of an extended republic. But it turns out that many Americans in 1787 had similar ideas about the advantages of diffusing factions in an enlarged and elevated republic. As Bernard Bailyn has pointed out, there were many Federalists who attempted to refute the traditional view that republics had to be small in size, and who used arguments very much like Madison's. Nearly three weeks before the publication of Madison's *Federalist* No. 10, the New Jersey lawyer John Stevens contended that extensive republics like that of the United States were better able to scatter and lessen the force of factions than small republics.

No one matched Madison in the depth and the elegance of his arguments, but he was not as original as we have sometimes thought. (This is equally true of most of the great political theorists when they are seen in their full historical contexts.) Once we look closely at Madison's contentions, we also discover that he was not the modern pluralist that many have believed him to be. He was not offering some early version of interest-group politics. He was not a forerunner of twentieth-century political scientists such as Arthur Bentley or David Truman. He did not see public policy or the common good emerging naturally from the give-and-take of hosts of competing interests.

Instead, Madison turns out to be much more old-fashioned and classical in his expectations. He expected that the clashing interests and passions in the enlarged national republic would neutralize themselves in society and allow liberally educated, rational men—men "whose enlightened views and virtuous sentiments render them superior to local prejudices, and to schemes of injustice"—to promote the public good in the government in a disinterested manner. Madison, in short, was not all as modern as we often make him out to be.

IN MADISON'S VIEW, not everyone in government had to be a party to a cause. He believed that there were a few disinterested gentlemen in the society—men such as Jefferson and himself—and he hoped that his system would allow these few to transcend the interest-mongering of the many in the society and be able to act as neutral judges or umpires in the new national Congress. As "an auxiliary desideratum" to his scheme, Madison predicted that the elevated and expanded sphere of national politics would act as a filter, refining the kind of men who would become national leaders. In a larger arena of national politics with an expanded electorate and a smaller number of representatives, the people were more apt to ignore the illiberal narrow-minded men with "factious tempers" and "local prejudices" who had dominated the state legislatures in the 1780s—the Yateses and the Findleys—and instead elect to the new federal government only those educated gentlemen with "the most attractive merit and the most ... established characters."

Madison understood that his scheme had worked just this way in religious matters. The multiplicity of religious sects in America prevented any one of them from dominating the society and permitted the enlightened reason of liberal gentlemen such as Jefferson and himself to shape public policy and church-state relations, and to protect the rights of minorities. "In a free government," wrote Madison in *Federalist* No. 51, "the security for civil



PLEASE DON'T WISH ME
A MERRY CHRISTMAS
A Critical History of the
Separation of Church and State
Stephen M. Feldman
"A wild ride."
—*The National Law Journal*
$20.00 paper
NYU Press
1-800-996-NYUP
www.nyupress.nyu.edu

NEW AUTHORS
PUBLISH YOUR WORK
ALL SUBJECTS CONSIDERED:
FICTION, BIOGRAPHY, POETRY, RELIGION, CHILDREN'S
AUTHORS WORLDWIDE INVITED
WRITE, OR SEND YOUR MANUSCRIPT TO:
MINERVA PUBLISHING CO.
1001 BRICKELL BAY DR., # 2310, MIAMI FL 33131

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rights must be the same as that for religious rights. It consists in the one case in the multiplicity of interests, and in the other in the multiplicity of sects."

MADISON'S THEORY MAY have worked out well in religious matters, but it did not seem to have much practical effect on the character of the new national government. Indeed, Madison himself at one point in the convention had actually contradicted his own theory of the multiplicity of factions by raising the specter of the nation being divided not into a variety of interests, but into the two great interests of free states and slave states.

Elections to the new national government, moreover, did not work out quite as he had expected. When, in March 1789, he looked over the list of representatives who were joining him in the First Congress, he found only "a very scanty proportion who will share in the drudgery of business," and when he contemplated the problems they would face, he foresaw "contentions first between federal and antifederal parties, and then between Northern and Southern parties, which give additional disagreeableness to the prospect."

And everything soon got worse. By the early 1790s, his former collaborator Hamilton had become his adversary, and was leading a faction that was promoting the interests of financiers and monarchists at the expense of the general public. It was not long before Madison and his good friend Jefferson were organizing their own faction—the Republican party—in opposition to the Federalist party. Instead of a multiplicity of interests neutralizing one another in the society, the various social and economic interests had coalesced into two great parties that had actually invaded the government.

By this time Madison had put his theory of an extended republic and the multiplicity of interests behind him. He was faced with new circumstances and new problems that required new ideas and new remedies. The vices of the 1790s were no longer factious majorities in the states but a factious minority in control of the national government. What were now needed were mechanisms and devices for arousing and organizing the majority opinion of the people.

That Madison thought new thoughts in the 1790s and apparently reversed many of his earlier positions bewildered some of his contemporaries, including Hamilton; and this has been a matter of great controversy among modern scholars. But perhaps Madison was more right than not when he suggested to Jefferson that he had only the eye of an "ordinary Politician" and was unwilling or unable to perceive "the sublime truths ... seen thro' the medium of Philosophy." We have to remind ourselves that Madison, as he himself noted, was not a closet philosopher. He was a working politician caught up in the daily hurly-burly of popular politics.

Of course, he was an especially thoughtful politician, who tried to make sense of what he was doing and who at times even tried to fit his ideas into some sort of larger scheme. Ultimately, though, he was not a scholar or a theorist who can be judged by modern standards of consistency and coherence. For all of his achievements, Madison should never be thought of as the philosopher of American government.

Indeed, there is no such being. The beauty of America's ongoing political theory is that it has never been made by any one person or groups of persons—not by Madison, or by any of the founders, or by all of them together, and certainly not by scholars in their studies. Like the marketplace, the theory of America has been made by the combined thinking of many engaged participants, no one of whom is in control (or perhaps even aware of) the complicated process of creation. And, most important, it is a political theory that was just begun in 1776 and 1787; it has continued throughout our history and continues today. The best thing about our insisting on Madison and the other founders as the basis of our political thought is that we at least start with a very high standard. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 5

turn produce poorer performance in college and graduate school. Pretending that SAT differences are due to "sending the wrong message" or adopting the wrong attitude only deflects attention from the real problem: poor preparation from babyhood through high school, lack of sustained interest and effort, and inadequate education.

AMY L. WAX
Professor of Law
University of Virginia School of Law
Charlottesville, Virginia

Poor health

TO THE EDITORS:

I would argue with just about every point Jonathan Cohn makes in "Protection Racket" (November 1), but I will confine myself to just one issue. Cohn objects to a "tax break" for buyers of medical coverage in the individual market, saying it would benefit only the affluent, since the poor either pay no tax or are in the lowest tax bracket, for which the deduction would be worth only 15 percent of the cost of coverage. He goes on to say that giving the tax break to those who are already buying coverage would reduce government revenues by $8 billion (Cohn makes the dubious assumption that this money is dedicated to medical care for the poor) and that these people don't need the deduction anyway since they are buying coverage despite the tax disadvantage.

Cohn does not consider that a tax break is now given to the 150 million or so Americans who buy coverage through their employers. Those 150 million are surely in tax brackets above, if not well above, the 15 percent bracket. Suppose they were on the same tax footing as the individual buyers for whom Cohn has no sympathy. The government would collect far more than $8 billion in additional taxes. Consider what that would do for providing medical care to the poor!

Why victimize the buyers in the individual market while continuing to give a tax advantage to group buyers? This has been policy for the last 50 years, and, along with other legislation, it has decimated the individual market and made it far more expensive for individuals to buy coverage, if they are able to get coverage at all. This is a major disadvantage for all individual buyers and certainly much more of a disadvantage for less-affluent Americans who might want to buy coverage.

The present policy cannot be reconciled with a wish to make coverage available and affordable to all. The tax inequity should be removed, along with the other rules that make it unattractive for insurers to offer policies to individuals and expensive for buyers who want to purchase them. Just as increased cost pushes marginal buyers out and lowers the number of people insured, surely lowering the cost in the individual market will enable marginal buyers to get coverage and thereby increase the number of people insured.

HOWARD F. STOCK, M.D.
Former President
Westchester County Medical Society
Via the Internet

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20036 (letters may also be sent electronically to: tnr@aol.com). All letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be fewer than 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please do not send letters via fax.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You deserve a factual look at...

The So-Called "Peace Process"

Does it lead down the road to another Holocaust?

Israel was founded fifty-one years ago. It has been a fixture in our lives for all of that time. It has played and continues to play a role—in our emotional lives, economically, politically, and militarily—way beyond its size and its population. Whatever our personal feelings and background, life without Israel is almost unimaginable. But there is a very real possibility that, within a time not too long from now, Israel will no longer exist, that it will be destroyed in a Holocaust even more terrible than the Holocaust of the Second World War, which killed six million Jews.

What are the facts?

Victimized by Arab Myths. Israel is the only country in the world whose legitimacy, whose "right to exist", has always been questioned. From its very beginning, from before its birth, Israel was surrounded by mortal enemies,single-mindedly obsessed with its destruction. The very day of its birth, in the truncated and minuscule territory assigned to it by the United Nations,six Arab armies invaded the newborn state. In what was clearly a biblical miracle, the invading hordes were defeated by the ragtag Israeli army.

In 1967, the same aggressors launched another attack against Israel, from the north (Syria), from the south (Egypt), and from the east (Jordan). The Six-Day War resulted in a complete rout of the Arabs, and a victory for Israeli arms that will be studied in war colleges for centuries to come.

Unable to vanquish Israel on the battlefield, the Arabs launched a propaganda war that has been very successful, and which the Jews (despite their reputation for being so "smart") have clearly and irretrievably lost.

Among the many myths propagated by the Arabs are that there is such a thing as a "Palestinian nation" (it's a concept that is not more than 40 years old); that the Israelis (Jews) are "occupiers" (if they were, who would be the sovereign that they displaced?); that Jerusalem is Islam's "third holiest city" (it's never once mentioned in the Koran, but hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible); the transformation of the age-old provinces of Judea/Samaria into the "West Bank"; the concept of "settlements" (with its connotation of illegality); and much more.

Israel — Utterly Vulnerable. These and other myths are what fuel the insistence of the Arabs, of most of the world, and, yes, also of the United States, that Israel allow itself to be dismembered and to turn part or even most of its tiny territory over to the "Palestinians." All concerned know well—and it has been acknowledged by our military leadership—that Israel would be utterly indefensible, at the mercy of its implacable enemies, if it were to divest itself of the Jordan Valley, of the "West Bank", of the Gaza Strip, and of the Golan Heights. Why then does the world insist that Israel make itself so utterly vulnerable? Does anybody really believe that the "Palestinians", or any of the Arabs, would be appeased, that they would reconcile themselves to the existence of a diminished Israel, even if Israel were to yield everything, turn the whole country over to the Arabs, except perhaps Tel Aviv and its suburbs? Everybody knows the answer. It would be an emphatic "NO", because the very existence of Israel, in whatever reduced territory, is an intolerable insult to the Muslim Arabs, for whom Israel must be rubbed out regardless of the sacrifices to be brought.

> "By its pious insistence on 'justice for the Palestinians' and pursuit of the 'peace process', by fomenting and profiting from the buildup of weapons of mass destruction solely destined for the destruction of Israel, the world actively promotes this second Holocaust."

Why does the world focus on the spurious claims of the "Palestinians", an artificially created nationality that never in recorded history had an identity or country of their own? Why is there no clamor that the French and Spanish give an independent country to their Basque minorities? How about the Kurds, who are under the heavy thumbs of the Iranians, the Turks, the Iraqis, and the Syrians? How about the Tibetans, subjugated by the Chinese; and so many others? Nobody cares. Nobody wants to "liberate" them. It's only the Jews who are being asked to dismember their tiny country, less than half of the size of San Bernardino County in California.

The Arab countries (and Iran) are frantically arming themselves with the most dreadful weapons of mass destruction. As the world knows, it is for one purpose only—their only political objective and their relentless obsession—namely the destruction of Israel. Two or three nuclear weapons would wipe Israel off the map once and for all. Retaliation by Israel, the destruction of major Arab cities, and millions of Arab casualties, would not deter the Muslim fanatics from pursuing their goal. For them, it would be a small price to pay. With Israel dismembered, with five or six Arab states poised to attack with weapons of mass destruction, with 40,000 Palestinian "police" armed to the teeth in Israel's midst, can anybody really doubt that a second Holocaust, even more terrible than the first one, is just about upon us? During the Nazi Holocaust, the whole world stood silently by and didn't lift a finger to prevent the most gruesome slaughter of innocents in the history of the world. In fact, many who were given the opportunity joyfully and enthusiastically participated in the bloodbath. By its pious insistence on "justice for the Palestinians" and pursuit of the "peace process", by fomenting and profiting from the buildup of weapons of mass destruction solely destined for the destruction of Israel, the world actively promotes this second Holocaust. Deep down inside, does the world really want the Jews to live or to disappear?

This ad has been published and paid for by

FLAME

Facts and Logic about the Middle East

P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco,CA 94159

FLAME is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational 501(c)(3) organization. Its purpose is the research and publication of the facts regarding developments in the Middle East and exposing false propaganda that might harm the interests of the United States and its allies in that area of the world.Your tax-deductible contributions are welcome. They enable us to pursue these goals and to publish these messages in national newspapers and magazines. We have virtually no overhead. Almost all of our revenue pays for our educational work, for these clarifying messages, and for related direct mail.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TEL AVIV DIARIST

Normal

OF ALL THE CITIES IN the world, my heart belongs to Jerusalem. It has always been so. But I loved it, like millions of other Jews over the long 2,000-year exile, even when I had not yet seen it. Now, however, my heart is informed by my eyes. I walk Jerusalem's streets and alleys, including many in the Arab sector, without fear of losing my way. And, when I do, I often happen upon some weighty spot—which is itself a joy. Every spot in Jerusalem is weighty for someone, but Christians and Muslims have other places that are already their Zions. How many Zions does a person or a group need? For Jews, for me, Jerusalem is the only place in the world that could be Zion—the heart of a once-again-sovereign Jewish nation, a providential trope crafted by modern politics.

THIS CONVICTION COLORED THE exuberant tour I imposed on my exhausted friend David Kansas, the editor of *TheStreet.com*, when we came to Israel on a business trip a few days ago. But Jerusalem itself is exhausting in a more concrete sense. It is the last battlefield of the century-old conflict between the Arabs and Jews of Palestine, and I for one am not sure that Jerusalem has seen the last bloodshed of that conflict, because bloodshed is what gives Yasir Arafat's struggle authenticity. Authenticity also lies at the heart of the city's searing Jewish wars, wars fought over two questions: (1) Who is a Jew? and (2) What is the meaning of a Jewish state? There is no escaping these questions in Jerusalem. They are not just in the air; they are on the street. So Jerusalem is a city where Jews still brood, where life is fraught with anxiety about identity, community, and hostile neighbors. Where life is not yet normal.

THIS IS NOT THE CASE IN TEL AVIV, the city around which one-third of the Israeli population lives. The founding of Tel Aviv coincided roughly with the birth of modern Zionism; that is to say, it occurred about 100 years ago. The city was built quite literally on the sands; and, aside from the few thousand Arabs who come from the beautiful, small town of Jaffa that was long ago surrounded by and incorporated into Tel Aviv, all its inhabitants are Jewish. And, since very few of those two million Jews are ultraorthodox Jews (or *haredim*, meaning "those who tremble"), piety does not preclude what is novel or unfamiliar. Tel Aviv is what one of my children, using a term of high compliment, calls "a happening place."

IT WAS NOT ALWAYS SO. FOR DECades, economic austerity imposed on the city a spartan ethos that was, if anything, exacerbated by the normative puritanism of Zionist socialism. Then, too, there were the dangers of life in Israel's nasty neighborhood, which affected every Israeli city. Arab armies were well-armed (by the Soviets), if not exactly well-trained, and periodic war against the Jews was all that secured Arab governments in power. Those days are now largely over. Not that Israel can let down its guard, given its vulnerability to what are so crisply termed unconventional weapons. But the government of Ehud Barak, while intent on peace, will not make an agreement that tempts the Palestinians (and the Iraqis and the Syrians) to war. So Israel is more self-confident than it has ever been. It is strong, and it is prosperous. You can feel it everywhere, and nowhere more than in Tel Aviv.

THIS IS NOT, THEN, JUST ANY HAPpening place. It is Barcelona and Notting Hill in London, the Marais in Paris and Sydney combined. And, yes, it is New York's TriBeCa and SoHo, Greenwich Village and Williamsburg, as well. A middle-aged person like myself feels like an interloper on the cult of the young. But there's one thing about the young: they are not trapped in the divisions of yesterday. The old divisions increasingly don't apply, and they don't apply because they are eroding demographically. Marriages between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, light Jews and dark, secular and traditional, those on the cutting edge of modernity and those reared in ancient verities, people of the Internet and People of the Book—such marriages are on the rise. The evidence is all around. Jews from Ethiopia marry half-Jews from Russia. There is no Jewish look, at least not here, and the result is a fuller, stronger Israeli identity than was once thought possible. Even Herzl only dimly imagined it. Now it lives, and it has the vibrancy of all great mixes.

TEL AVIV IS A CAFÉ CITY, AN OUTDOORcafé city, and the cigarette police are not on patrol. It is a city interested in fashionable clothes, fashion of all sorts, and in striking bodies. (The body was an icon in early Zionism, a manifestation of the new Jew. Even nerdy Franz Kafka, when he joined a Zionist organization in Prague, began to lift weights.) It is a beach city, with aggressive high-rises and pockets of graceful neo-Bauhaus constructions adapted to "Orientalist" style.

TEL AVIV IS A CITY THAT DANCES, dances to trance music and wave music, rave music and stomp music. There is also Middle Eastern music and music that is a fusion of East and West. Still, the Israel Philharmonic (which was founded as the Palestine Philharmonic—Palestine used to be a Zionist word—by a relative of mine, the violinist Bronislaw Huberman) and the many other classical ensembles arising from the Russian migration do very well. In fact, the migration brought musicians and their audiences at once. Tel Aviv is a city that goes to the theater, grounded drama and edgy drama, so thoughtlessly that its bad-boy playwrights, we were told in a recent *New York Times* article by Deborah Sontag, long for the old censorious times. A former student of mine at Harvard, Barak Marshall, and I were walking in Jaffa, and someone came up and asked, "Aren't you Barak?" I asked the questioner how he knew my friend. "Everybody who cares about dance knows Barak," he responded. Barak is maybe 29. He didn't dance until he was 24. The winner of many international prizes, he is now the choreographer at the very established Batsheva Dance Company, and his own group, Bazouz, has quite literally taken the country by storm. But I shouldn't have been surprised. This is also a country in which a book of poetry sells 20,000 copies.

DAVID, BARAK, AND I STROLLED ON the Mediterranean promenade just south of the Hilton, past Tel Aviv's former downtown center, through the no-man's-land that separated the new Jewish city from old Arab Jaffa, into the ancient seaport, almost to Bat Yam. A five-mile walk, maybe more, past a stretch of eateries, music venues, coffee houses and dance bars, families, friends, lovers, old people, children. No one will mistake this for Jerusalem. No one is brooding, not about the Jewish question and not about the Arab question, either. These people are not a light unto the nations, and they do not want to be. Neither do they want to be history's victims, and they won't be. They are really the first normal Jews in 2,000 years, Jews without complexes, Jews without prophecies. Tel Aviv is their city, the first truly Zionist city, and it is open to the world.

MARTIN PERETZ

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BLUE HEART

By Caryl Churchill at The Studio Theatre

Theatrical Invention at it's Best! Playwright Caryl Churchill at her most innovative!

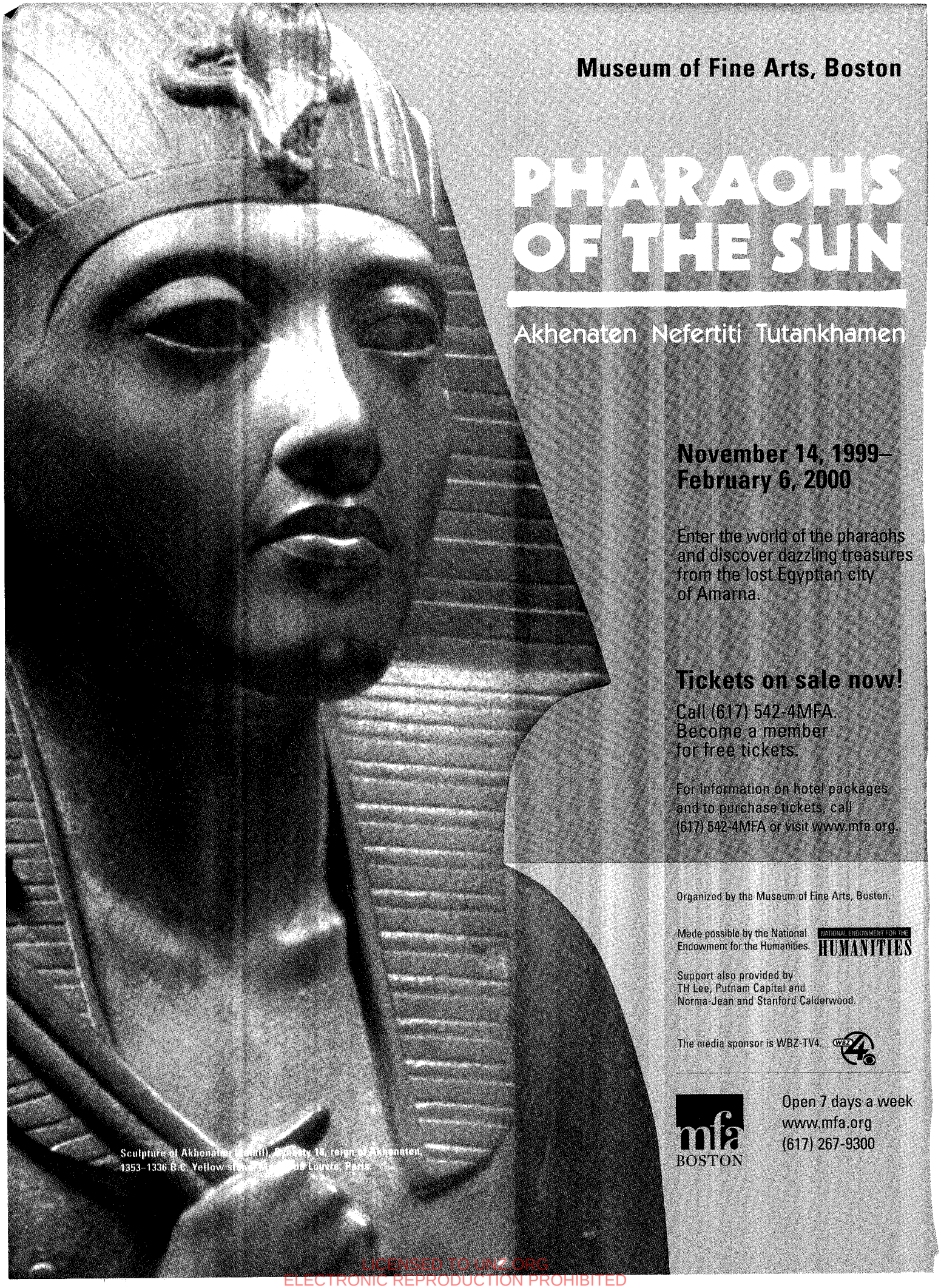
Two teasing plays by England's premiere BLUEwright Caryl Churchill KETTLE around mind-games and family affairs. Expect the KETTLE from these BLUE deliciously unpredictable BLUE, BLUEing with truth, KETTLE and K.

Like a computer smitten with a virus, these plays appear programmed to come irrevocably unglued as the evening progresses. Caryl Churchill, creator of *Top Girls* and *Cloud Nine*, enjoys playing games with theatrical form and language.

Opening November 3

The Studio Theatre
14th and P Streets, NW
Washington, DC
202-332-3300

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

PHARAOHS OF THE SUN

Akhenaten Nefertiti Tutankhamen

**November 14, 1999–
February 6, 2000**

Enter the world of the pharaohs and discover dazzling treasures from the lost Egyptian city of Amarna.

Tickets on sale now!

Call (617) 542-4MFA.
Become a member for free tickets.

For information on hotel packages and to purchase tickets, call (617) 542-4MFA or visit www.mfa.org.

Organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities. NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Support also provided by TH Lee, Putnam Capital and Norma-Jean and Stanford Calderwood.

The media sponsor is WBZ-TV4. WBZ 4

mfa BOSTON

Open 7 days a week
www.mfa.org
(617) 267-9300

Sculpture of Akhenaten (detail). Probably 18. reign of Akhenaten, 1353–1336 B.C. Yellow st[illegible] Musée du Louvre, Paris.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED